MAY 1965

# Commentary

VOLUME THIRTY-NINE, NUMBER FIVE

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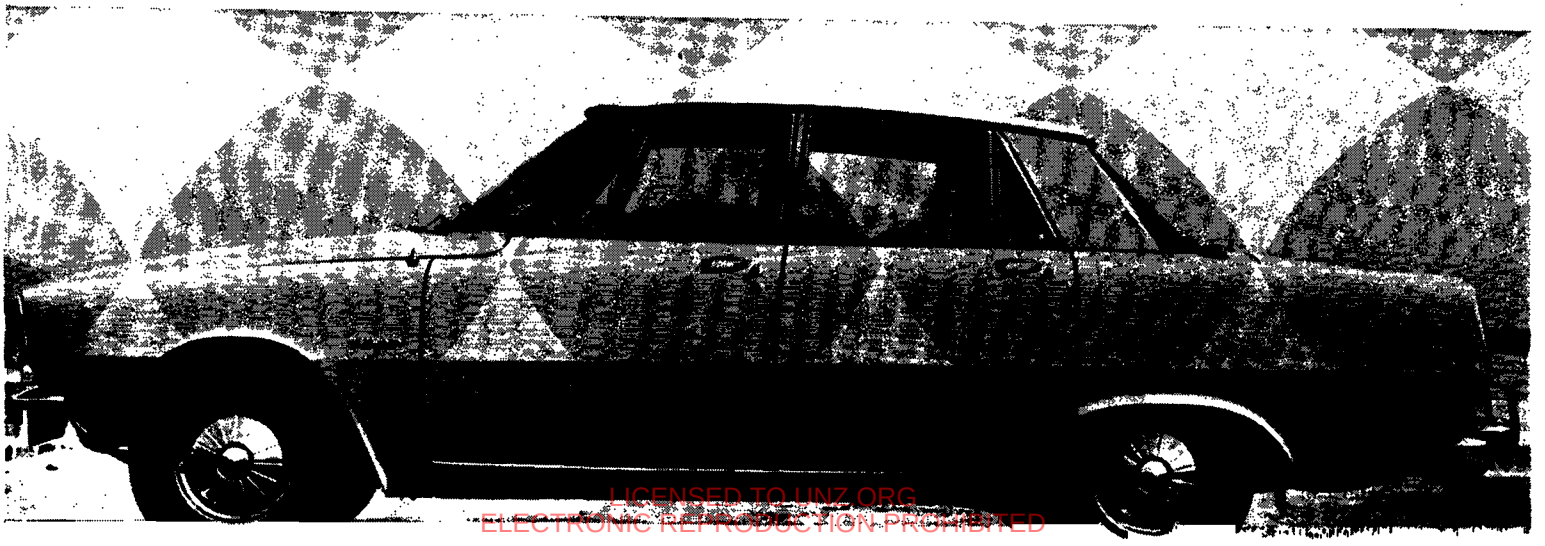

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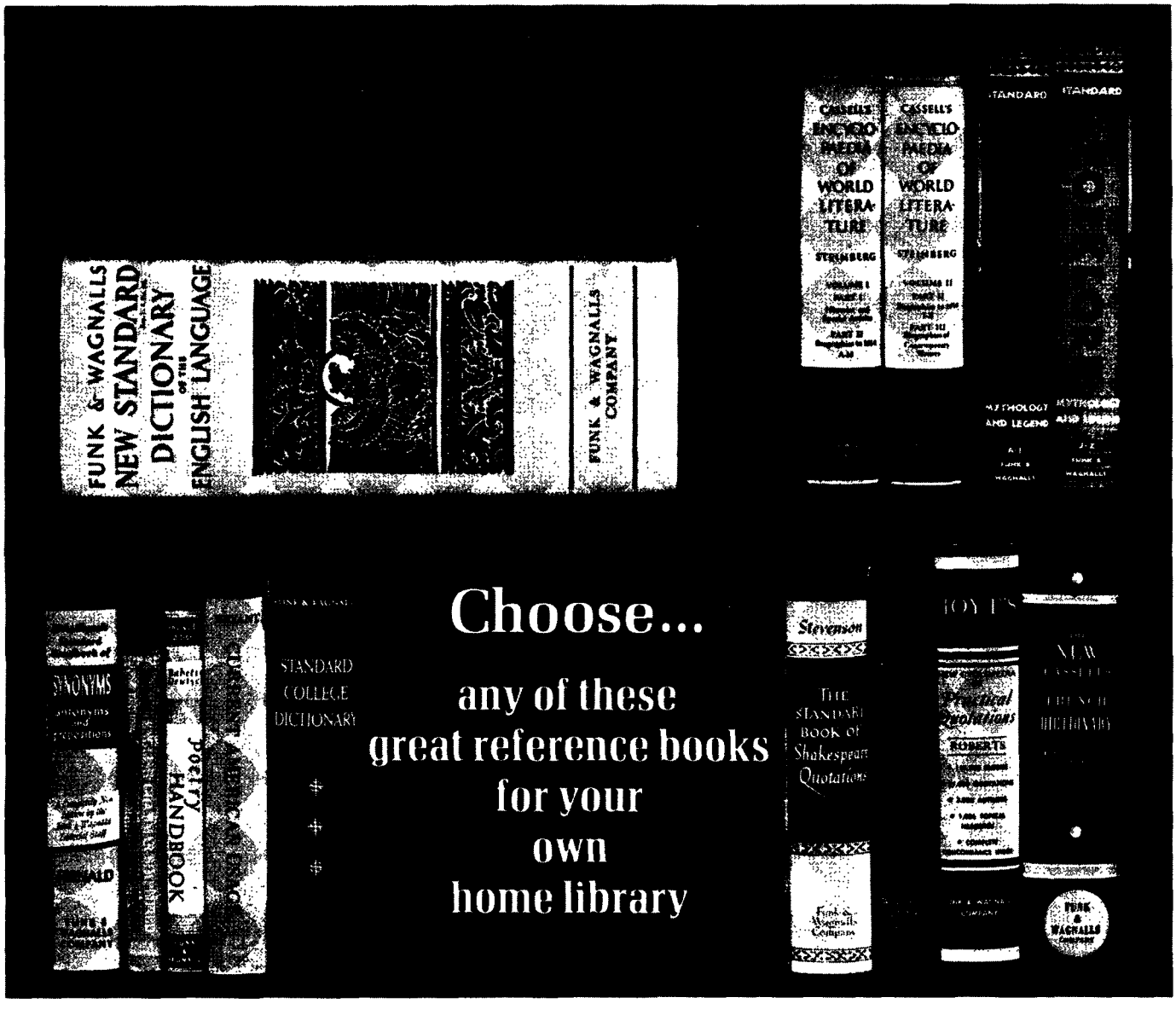


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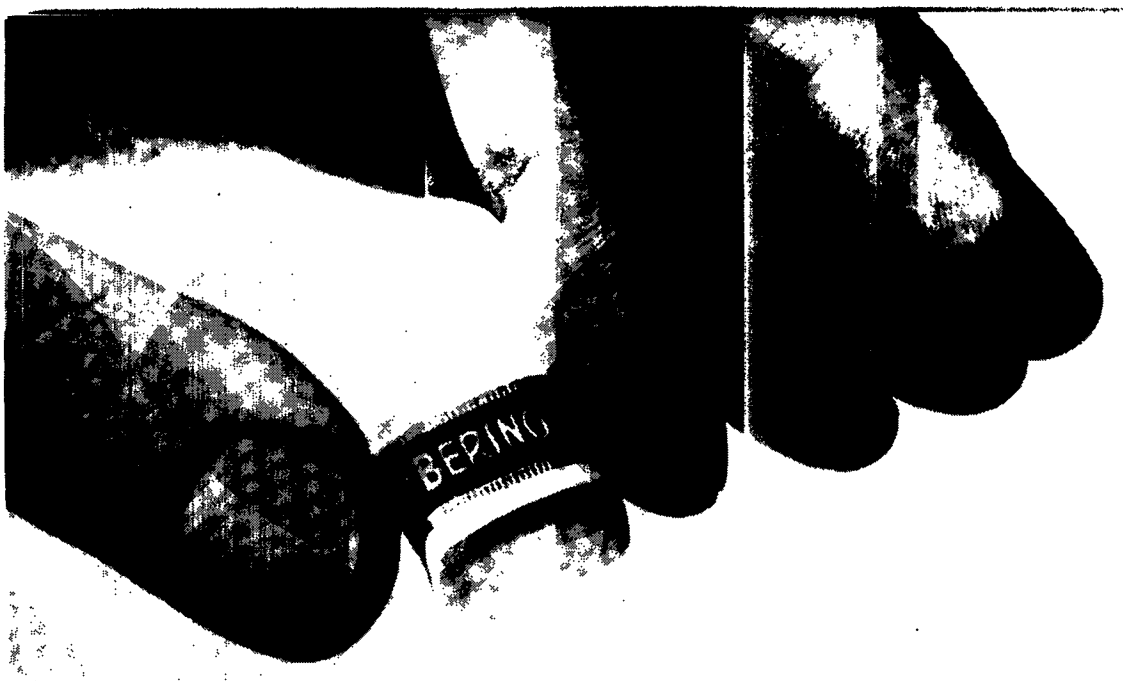


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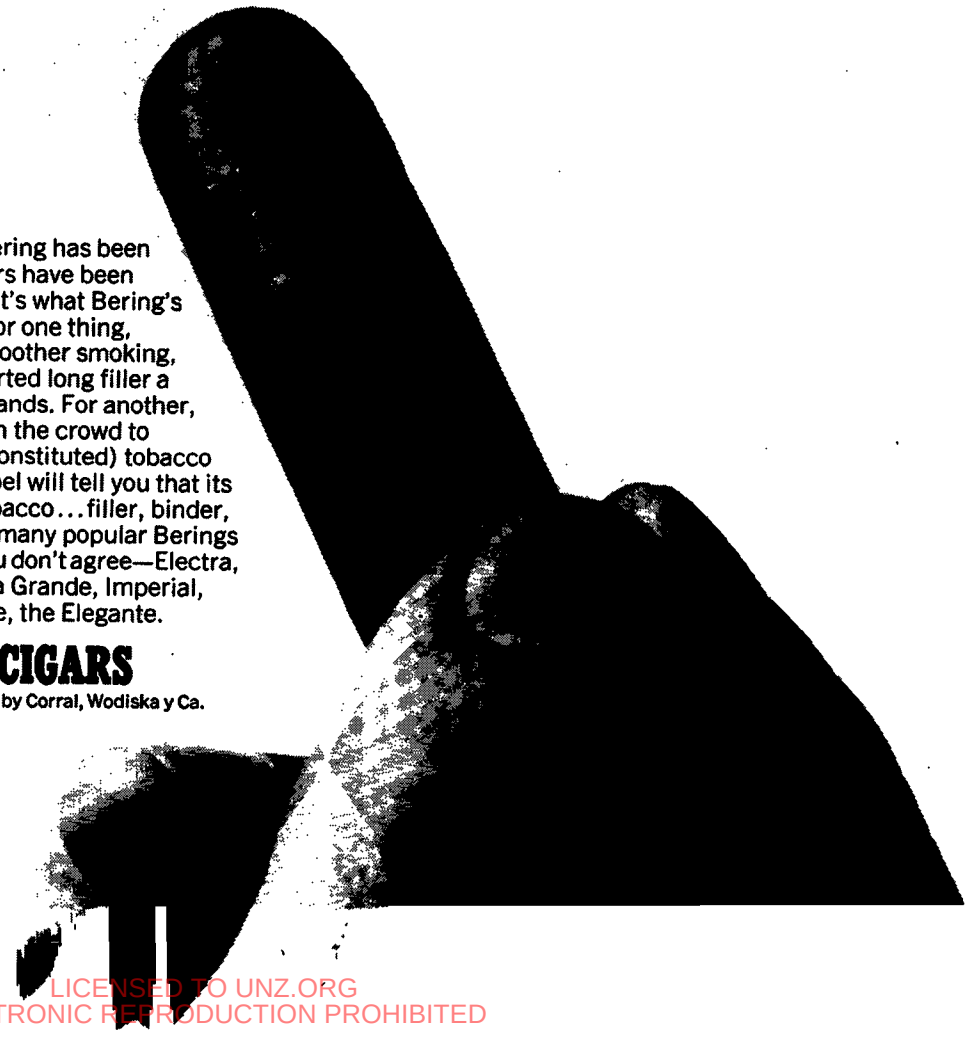

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## Clarification

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I find so much that is sound and basic in Nathan Glazer's "Negroes & Jews: The New Challenge to Pluralism" [December 1964] that I hesitate to point up an unfortunate misunderstanding of my position on social discrimination. In referring to my view, the author says:

> He did not attack social discrimination as such—he attacked it because of its political and economic consequences and suggested it was abetting economic and political discrimination.

I *did* definitely attack social discrimination in all its forms and I still do. And I hold this view not because of economic consequences alone, even though these are indeed important, especially in those areas where social status is a determining factor. I have emphasized individual merit and quality of the person, be they intellectual, aesthetic, moral, or even recreational, as criteria for group social association—those attributes that constitute congeniality. But let there be eliminated from any selective criteria the imputation of religious, racial, or ethnic group inferiority. In the case of the Jew, this implies figuratively, "the Yellow Star."

There is no contradiction between the retention of religio-cultural (including racial) group identity and the abolition of social-discrimination barriers. The group in a pluralistic society, such as the United States, exists as a voluntary association of those sharing common cultural traditions, ethnic characteristics, or religious commitments. It does not constitute a caste system, as does the exclusionary social club. It is fully compatible with the American pattern; yet, unless it is dedicated to the specific religious, cultural, or ethnic purposes common to its members, it is irrelevant. These "irrelevant association groups" are themselves largely victims of caste-system exclusionary practices.

Hence, group identity and unhindered participation in all facets of the life of America are twin goals fully compatible and, as a matter of fact, mutually reinforcing. I suggest that the Negro problem in America, while primarily a problem of exclusion, is also one of inadequate group identity—and here, too, one element reinforces the other.

JOHN SLAWSON
Executive Vice-President
The American Jewish Committee
New York City

[*More correspondence on Mr. Glazer's piece will appear in subsequent issues*].

## "I'm Sorry, Dear" (cont'd)

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dr. Leslie H. Farber's article ["I'm Sorry, Dear," November 1964] is more than an unusually bold and sensitive discussion about sex in the present age. It is also a profound analysis of the whole dilemma of 20th-century Western man—one of the profoundest I have read in years. Its greatest merit is its spirit of hope. Like Kierkegaardian reflection (to which it seems much indebted), it points to an immediacy after reflection: for men and women with enough courage to surrender the kind of will which divides them from their bodies-made-into-machines and become human again—that is, imperfect but whole.

EMIL L. FACKENHEIM
Dept. of Philosophy
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dr. Farber . . . remarks that over the last sixty years, "sex has lost its viability as a human experience." He did not perhaps intend such an obvious Goldwaterism, but I sense a nostalgia somewhere. No matter—though one could add that not only sex, but a great deal of other human experience as well does not seem as viable today as it did sixty years ago, before the Nazi debacle, the atom bomb, and even the flowering of his own specialty, psychoanalysis (on which subject he seems to have a wholly admirable ambivalence). Dr. Farber's prime example, however, Dr. Masters's Washington University project . . . does not prove his point; in fact, it proves quite the opposite since it is its very viability that he criticizes: that such an experiment is possible!

What Dr. Farber is getting at is of course quite obvious. The more empirical the analysis one applies to an area of human conduct, the more distant and elusive becomes "spontaneity," that word so beloved by psychologists . . . or "grace," existentially speaking, that impossible aspiration which does bridge the gap between heaven and earth, or male and female if one is a mere sexologist. Dr. Farber tells us we will not find it in the laboratory, but who would look for it there in the first place? I do not believe in Dr. Masters's laboratory at all. I think it was invented by Murray Schisgal or Harold Pinter. As a writer, I wish I'd thought of it myself. Which all goes to prove that Nature *does* imitate Art and Dr. Farber could profit from more contemporary readings than Lawrence.

And where does Dr. Farber himself practice? . . . The laboratory of the psychoanalytic interview is only slightly less sterile than the Washington project. Is the analyst, the unmoved mover, moved? How does he bear up under eight hours of daily recital of missed orgasms, marital disasters, concealed homosexuality, fantastic adulteries—that enormous quanta of human experience which piles up daily, monthly, yearly, on his tape recorder or 4 x 6 filing cards? Is this constant exposure less horrendous than a woman writhing under klieg lights? . . . But Dr. Farber has compassion and humor, already signs of heresy . . . and there is no doubt about it, a really lucid criticism of the quantitative sexual response as embodied in the marriage manuals, etc., is long overdue. . . .

Avoidance of mechanics, however, does not in itself lead to spontaneity in sexual behavior. Does Dr. Farber mean to imply that it does? Those who don't read sex manuals are not, I would safely say, more spontaneous nor do they lead better sex lives than those who do. Like most analysts, Dr. Farber sees patients everywhere, the female subjects of Dr. Masters's sex-periments, the two witnessing sex-



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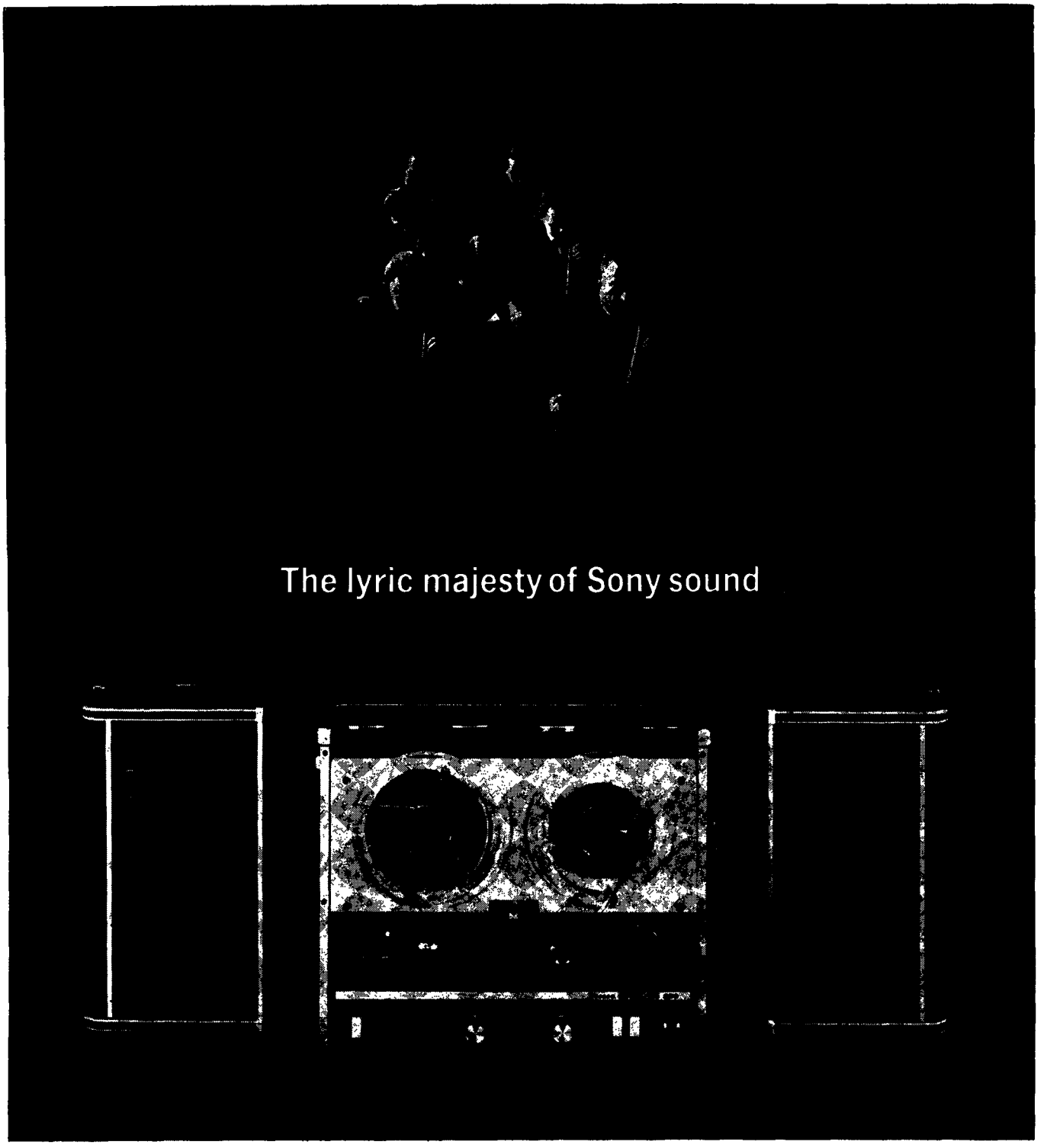


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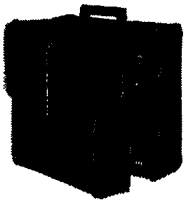

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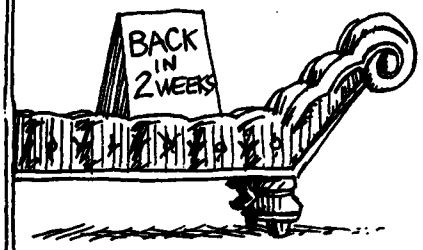


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ologists. He is guilty (and I really like him for this) of a (no other word for it) obscene curiosity as to these last unknown participants. His description is high comedy. I haven't touched on Dr. Farber's main point, that he believes the need for simultaneous orgasm to be wholly unnecessary. It is just not possible to discuss this without ribaldry. . . .

P. C. RICHMOND
Rome, Italy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Even if Dr. Farber cannot bring himself to believe it, the doctrine that holds reproduction to be the sole end and aim of any respectable human mating, and that holds all its other benefits to be at most only derivatively legitimate is, indeed, of religious origin. Theologians recognized in sexual love one of the most dangerous potential menaces to the individual's pursuit of ascetic and innerworldly goals and they therefore placed it (particularly in the Catholic and Calvinist traditions of Christianity) under very strong ideological controls. Perhaps now, in what has been called the post-Christian era, we will at last accord this love—the love which uplifts and makes glad the hearts of men—its due natural piety. Pseudo-therapeutic doctrines of physical experience are another matter; and of course Dr. Farber is quite right in attacking them.

*Pace* Dr. Farber, I doubt that women were any happier before what he calls "sexology" than Negroes were before the current struggle for civil rights began. It is hard to imagine that either one was content with . . . the theory that assigned a measurable economic price to a wife and slave and claimed they could be owned like other commodities; and the code that made it nearly impossible for them to realize the virtues of the artist, citizen, or philosopher. That American society has confronted, and to some degree still confronts, women and Negroes with an almost intolerable gap between expectation and reality is bad enough. We needn't make things worse by investing this oppression with an aura of mystery and thus helping to prolong it.

Dr. Farber's criticisms of Dr. Masters's experiments are very telling and he has earned our gratitude by reproducing with humane candor an all-too-typical post-intercourse exchange. But I do not think "I'm Sorry, Dear," which presents a regressive thesis in a provocative and daring way, is, as some might think, a major contribution to contemporary self-awareness. Instead, it seems to me to confirm Santayana's sad reflection that the opponents of the ruling orthodoxy often merely invert its errors rather than discovering new truths.

JACOB TAUBES
Free University of Berlin
Berlin, West Germany

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The central issue [of Dr. Farber's article] is that our society, vulgarizing what it believes to be a scientific position, increasingly dissociates sexual performance from the wholeness of the self. The mass media think the sexual revolution is intercourse without marriage. Dr. Farber's merit is to warn us that we are well into the next stage: orgasm without relationship. (The very usage shows how far we have come. To say "orgasm without *love*," today would draw snickers, for only neophytes or sentimentalists still talk that way. "Relationship" may be jargon but it is many people's hope for a standard to guide a generation unworried about syphilis, conception, or social disapproval.) Farber is distressed because he sees sexuality becoming impersonal, even mechanical. . . .

With all the cries about the dehumanization of man in politics, industry, and education, too little has been said until now about the same cancer affecting the most private and personal level of human behavior. Many a modern man has believed he could resist society by retaining an intimate sanctuary of sex and love where his soul might be restored, but no such refuge will be tolerated. . . . The fight for the whole person and the integrity of his nature becomes ever more desperate and important. The existentialist critique of contemporary society retains its prophetic ring but may not go far enough. . . .

Judaism began a religious revolution when, from its earliest days, it acknowledged a God who transcended sexuality without spurning it. Being beyond sex, He could set appropriate standards for its exercise and thus for its sanctification. When sexual intercourse was part of loving one's wife, having a family, enjoying the Sabbath and serving God in holiness, it was a joyous path to an ennobling goal. Today, when sensation is god

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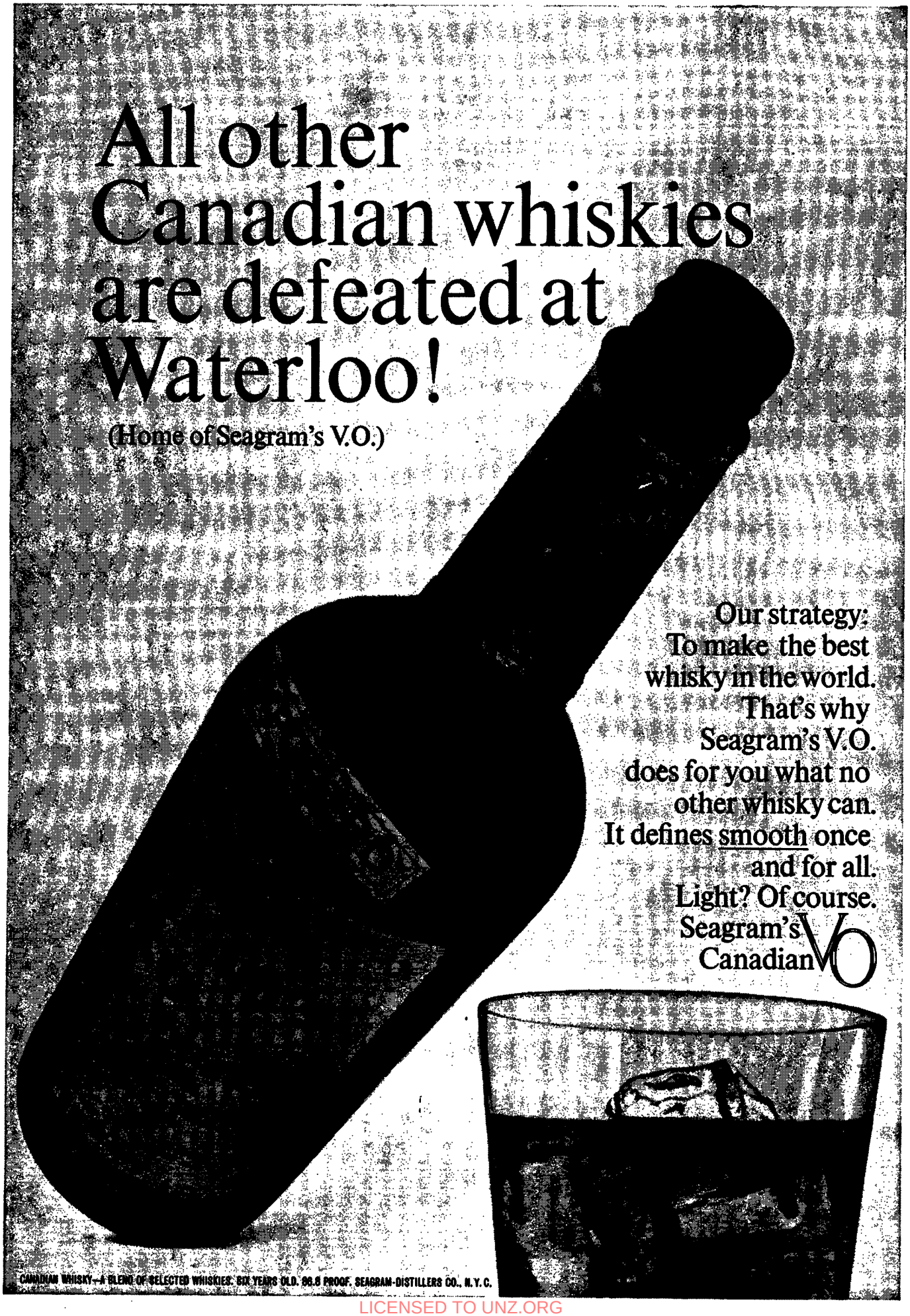

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and orgasm is revelation, man's image is radically constricted and his self is less than his genitality. . . .

(Rabbi) Eugene B. Borowitz
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

The undersigned was born in 1899 in Victorian days, and first read Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* in college in 1915. Now that I have read your article, entitled, I believe, "Move Over, Dear" (with the aid of a dictionary), I have read "everything." . . .

Louis S. Bing
San Francisco, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

I sympathize and in large part agree with Dr. Farber's sentiments against a purely behavioristic, "basic science" approach. But from this honest gripe against the gods of the laboratory, he has succeeded only in building a demonology all too reminiscent of the fundamentalist response to Darwin. Characteristically, this reactionary posture attempts to rout the scientistic demons on their own territory and in terms comprehensible to them; it attempts to "outscience the scientists" and lands Dr. Farber in Dr. Masters's camp by the same process that turns the arch-fundamentalist into a living caricature of the Lockean rationalist. The real point is not that scientific inquiry is wrong or that exposure to its findings is harmful, no matter how improbable or recondite they may be. The point is not demonry but idolatry: assigning central significance to what is only marginal or tangential.

A very serious defect in Dr. Farber's demonophobia is the idyllic fantasy he invokes of sex relations in the good old days of ignorance and legally enforced male supremacy.

No one, to my knowledge, has compiled statistics on the number of persons put to death in a bestially cruel manner for *fellatio* or *cunnilingus* in the Middle Ages. Students of the history of capital punishment have, however, observed the inefficacy of even the most hideous punishments as a deterrent to crime. [Hence] we may surmise that many sexual practices that were punishable—including simple fornication—went unpunished in the majority of cases because the penalty was a spur to discretion rather than abstention. The sexual revolution of this century did not occur in a vacuum, and even in its present phase it has not yet reached the level of complete candor. It is disingenuous to assume (the parallel to the racial crisis is striking) that agitators and intruders are solely to blame. . . .

What Dr. Farber calls the change in our experience of our bodies or the sense that "our fleshly home" has become a laboratory where experiment occurs must be seen actually as an experience of freedom, with all that this implies. I hope I am not grossly exaggerating if I say that in very broad terms it may be analogous to the crisis of liberation experienced by inmates of the Nazi concentration camps at the moment of their being released.

Sociological factors such as rapid vertical social mobility, the tempo of urban life, etc., probably have more to do with the relative instability of present-day sexual relationships, marital and otherwise, than have feminism, scientism, or specifically sexual factors. Overemphasis on sex technique is due, I think, to the newness of the situation, and indicates misplacement rather than a wrong choice among mutually exclusive possibilities. . . . Dr. Farber has not come to terms with the fundamental interrelation of love and sexuality. I think evidence can be found that, other factors being equal, a deep commitment to one's sexual partner enhances and enriches the quality of orgasm when it occurs. May it perhaps also enhance its likelihood or frequency or duration? The gist of Dr. Masters's work apparently says nothing about this, but precisely because of its "basic science" lovelessness, it says something useful about what happens otherwise; by doing so, it may provide a firmer basis for understanding how love alters the experience and fulfills it. Hence, contrary to what Dr. Farber supposes, full acquaintance with the nature of sex *per se* may help to reveal the importance of love and the kind of commitment it implies. (Perhaps it is not enough to invoke "love" without also saying "wonder" and "mystery," for in it we enter a religious dimension that makes the difference between thrill and ecstasy. Sexual technique, like liturgy, does not itself produce the experience but conduces it.)

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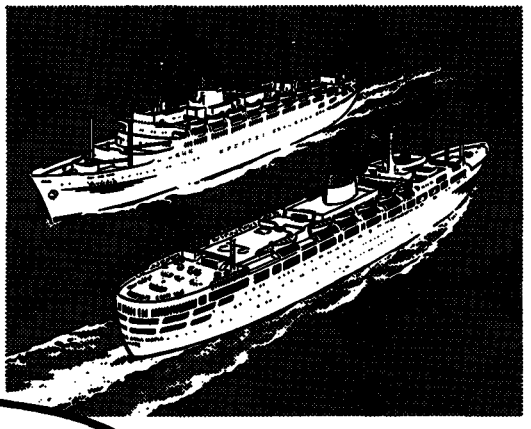

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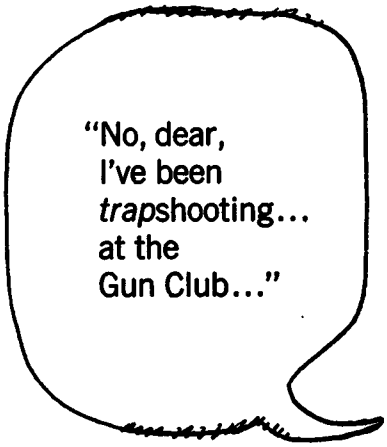


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Dr. Farber's opening vignette is only a very partial representation of the question. Its truth is limited and his answer even more so. He begins to suggest the basis of better answers and even hints at the larger question, but then the demons deflect his inquiry and make of it an inquisition. We have had quite enough of those. The importance of the female orgasm may not be supreme but it is legitimate. It need be neither the frantic desideratum nor the random accident which he offers as alternatives. As in all things, sex will be at its best when freedom and equality are at an optimum. There are pitfalls along the route, to be sure, but the hallowing of the way is not accomplished by Comstockery, however disguised. We must be free to mature, to dispense with the misguidance of conventional wisdom and moralistic blinders. Finally, we must be free to let conscience and responsibility function and to recognize that the will of God, however we choose to construe it, is not defined by any set of rules, however useful these may be. There is no absolute except God Himself, blessed be He, and the highest form of obedience is love freely given. Beyond the questions so far broached we must be prepared ultimately to ask whether there is indeed any form of human sexual relation (I deliberately do not choose the word "activity") to which it does not apply. Whether we have to do with orgasm, asceticism, adultery, or any other existential option, this is the perennial question that we have tried to quash by fiat, to the detriment of faith.

WILLIAM ROBERT MILLER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It makes as much sense to criticize Dr. Masters's attempts to carry out objective studies of female sexual responses on grounds that sexual activity has a wealth of emotional and interpersonal significance, as to disqualify research on central nervous system physiology because it does scant justice to the writings of Shakespeare and other great products of the human brain; or to condemn investigation of the workings of the human eye because it bears but little relation to the complexity of our experience as we stand before a Rembrandt canvas; or even to forbid study of the mechanism of elimination, an experience, after all, which for some is as full of underlying meanings as sexual activity is for others. . . .

It must be emphasized that the reader, in any case, has no title to pass judgment on the work of Dr. Masters on the basis of the frankly biased and highly flavored account given by Dr. Farber.

I found Dr. Farber's evaluation of contemporary sexual ills extremely interesting and telling. However, he should not have made a scapegoat of a man who is guilty, as far as we know, of nothing more than being a competent and highly conscientious investigator.

(DR.) DAVID SAVITZ
Bethesda, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dr. Farber is perceptive in pointing out the dialectical link between sexual and political theory and practice. I wonder, however, if he fully understands the political content of some of the tacit premises on which his own arguments rest. He derides, in passing, a sect which worshipped the Serpent in the Garden of Eden; yet his own deepest feeling seems to be nostalgia for a lost Garden of Earthly Delights which men presumably enjoyed before that serpent, Enlightenment, arrived. Students of political thought will recognize this sort of rhetoric at once: it is Reaction's old sweet song. Since Burke's time we have grown accustomed to endless laments for the good old days before the masses began making their crass materialist demands for quantitative "satisfaction," aided by that "pig-philosophy" (as Carlyle called it), Utilitarianism, which affirmed satisfaction as their right. Back then, the "perturbation" of most of mankind was indeed (to use Farber's words) "unremarkable and certainly bearable," for men "had not yet been enlightened"; they were quite "content" with their lot, and "would not have it otherwise." "At this stage" particular rights and satisfactions "had not yet been abstracted and isolated from the totality" of human existence, or "enshrined as the meaning and measure of . . . life." Notions which men "retained from an older tradition" assured them that ultimate values were "private and unique," beyond discussion or criticism. Thus peasants grubbing in the fields (as most men were in those days), barely subsisting, could nevertheless celebrate "the mystery of difference, the impact of human contingency," and could be grateful and happy for such small contingencies as might come their way.

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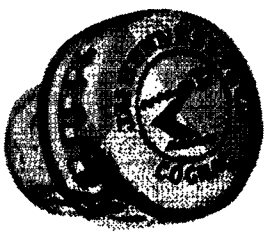

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It was only through the intrusion of those whom Burke called "sophisters, economists and calculators," spreading "the delusive plausibilities of moral politicians" in their wake, that this political "glory of Europe [was] extinguished forever." It has taken Dr. Farber's correlative sexual glories somewhat longer to die, and his *kaddish* may even now be a bit premature. But I wonder, in any case, how many of us really want to join in the mourning. I am just as appalled as Farber is by the crudities of sexual engineering in America today—just as I am appalled by the grubby acquisitiveness and manipulation that pervade so many spheres of American life. But this does not seem to me sufficient reason to yearn for a time when everyone knew and accepted his place, when people made no demands on life because they felt entitled to nothing. It may be pathetically self-destructive, as Farber suggests, to "strive for heaven on earth"; but it would be just as pathetic to revert to a fatalistic indifference to things of this world. If sexual freedom is a dead end for many of us, we must try to think and feel our way out, to work out new ways of living with one another—in particular, we must learn to spike our love and our romantic aspirations with irony and humor. In private as in public life, it does not seem very manly—*menschlich,* I mean—to escape from freedom entirely, to soothe the flesh by mortifying the spirit, by giving up our sense of possibility. Love may be the greatest of all things, but I doubt whether love can thrive except in a climate of faith and hope.

MARSHALL BERMAN
Dept. of Government
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Now that COMMENTARY has given us so brilliant an analysis of the science of sexology as Dr. Leslie Farber's in "I'm Sorry, Dear," I would strongly urge that you commit the author to a return engagement. Please get him to do a more generalizing article—it is clear how well he could do it—on the literal imagination of our time, the imagination that has lost contact with context and that cannot give a large human perspective to a fact.

Actually our sense of a "fact" can be dehumanized, driven out of its human context, and emerge absurd. *There* is a fine subject: "What is a 'fact'?" A culture is on its way to illness when it cannot keep facts in perspective. Sexology is a good example, and I am sure no sensible reader will misunderstand the satire within Dr. Farber's attack on it. But let him go still further with this kind of analysis.

WILLIAM F. LYNCH, S.J.
St. Peter's College
Jersey City, New Jersey

## The Role of Lenin

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a biographer of Lenin, I am above all concerned with the fact that Lenin was. But this does not prevent me from being fascinated by the question which Leonard Schapiro poses ["Was Lenin Necessary?" December 1964]. The view I take in *The Life of Lenin* deviates little if at all from Professor Schapiro's; I hold that in the circumstances Lenin was necessary to the launching of the Bolshevik revolution. Without him it probably would never have taken place. To support this thesis I adduce many facts and quote the passage from Trotsky which Schapiro mentions.

Mr. Schapiro's next question reads: ". . . would Russia . . . have been worse off" had there been no Lenin and therefore no Bolshevik revolution? Professor Schapiro does not seem alive to the fact that I answered this . . . in dealing with the polemic in February 1920 between Lenin and Otto Bauer, the Austrian socialist leader. I wrote: "Yet a comparison between the economic status and political power of the Austrian workingman and the Soviet workingman would lead one to wonder who was right: Lenin with his violence or Bauer with his 'revolution by taxation!'" A biographer, however, should not merely speculate, he should also explain, and I accordingly explained that "Lenin was a prisoner of Russia's history," etc. Lenin succeeded because Russia was Russia; he himself stated that a revolution would be more difficult in other countries, not ruled by Nicholases and Rasputins. He, too, gave persons a decisive role in history. But I believe that if there had been no First World War or if Russia had left that war in 1916 or in mid-1917 the Bolshevik revolution would not

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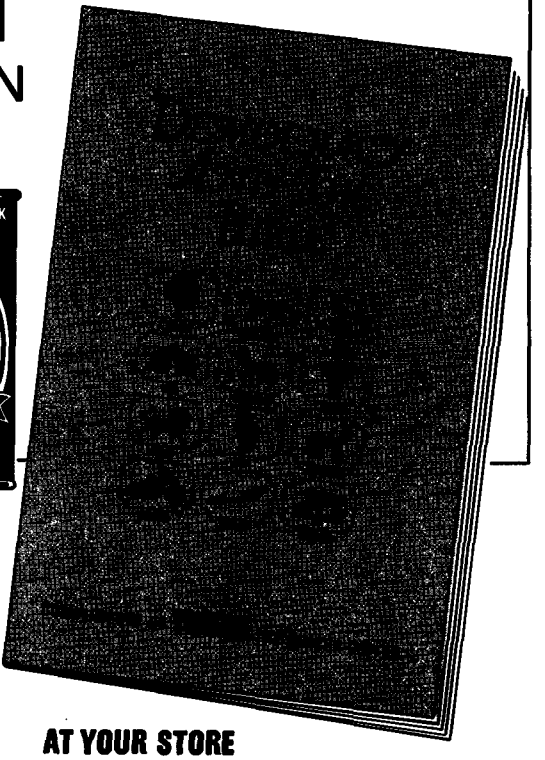

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have occurred. Professor Schapiro seems to concur.

LOUIS FISCHER
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I found Leonard Schapiro's article . . . rather confusing.

While I agree with Mr. Schapiro that Lenin's totalitarian frame of mind later led to the terror of Stalin, I doubt that Russia in 1917 . . . would or could have become a peaceful, democratic, highly industrialized country under any regime. Mr. Schapiro makes a series of unsubstantiated assumptions with which I disagree; for example, that without Lenin, Russia . . . would eventually have turned to a democratic constitutional regime in order to solve its problems. . . . It is difficult for me to imagine that the inhabitants of Russia, most of whom were reared in authoritarian family settings, lived in authoritarian villages or workers' barracks, worshipped in an authoritarian church, and were educated in authoritarian schools (if they went to school at all), would have turned to an anti-authoritarian form of government as means of helping them achieve their aspirations. . . .

I believe that, if the Communists had been unsuccessful in 1917, Russia might well have become the first fascist or Nazi state in Europe. There was much more support for totalitarian than for democratic governments in Russia. While the monarchy and the aristocracy might not have recovered their lost prestige (nor the landlords their confiscated lands), both might well have encouraged a mass political movement which could have claimed, say, that Russia was betrayed by the Jews, the foreigners, and the intellectuals who had brought democracy and other unorthodox ideas into the government. At any rate, a fascist or a Nazi Russia would have been as much a danger to the rest of the world as a Communist Russia has been. . . . A German fascist state might just as well have attempted to obtain its *Lebensraum* at the expense of a Russian fascist state. The pattern of World War II could have been repeated, with the invasion of Russia following the defeat of France.

I think that Mr. Schapiro ought to let well enough alone. The alternative to a Lenin could have been a Hitler rather than a Masaryk.

DAVID RODNICK
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

MR. SCHAPIRO *writes:*

I trust that Louis Fischer, whose book I very much admired, is not under the impression that I was criticizing him for any kind of omission. On the contrary, my article was a general article partly inspired by his book, and, of course, as always, I am much reinforced in my views when I find Louis Fischer agreeing with me.

## The Tragic Sense

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Lionel Abel's "Is There A Tragic Sense of Life?" [December 1964] is a beautiful essay, written in the peculiar plastic style which recalls Socrates's colloquii. But Abel's interpretation of Unamuno is strange. The author of *The Tragic Sense of Life* defined all his thinking in the famous sentence: *"El dolor es la constancia de la vida y la raiz de la personalidad, puer solo sufriendo se es persona"* [Pain is the constant factor of life and the source of being, for only through suffering does one become a man].

JOSÉ MIRELMAN
Tel Aviv, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

To ask an old Jew if there is a tragic sense of life is like asking him if there is a God and is He One? He would disdain to answer, regarding the poser of such questions as disqualified even to ask them. Belonging to a small but timeless community . . . his tragic sense of life is communal, emotional, and historic, an integral part of his faith and transmitted from generation to generation. . . .

And it has nothing to do with the reading, writing, or witnessing of tragedy on or off the stage. It is an all-pervasive feeling as omnipresent as light, in the presence of which experience and memory are entertained, tested, and endured. . . .

In America, a secular country, the tragic sense of life is without tradition. . . . Not even Lionel Abel can envision us living in a world whose spiritual windows open on a tragic view of life. . . .

EUGENE J. HOCHMAN
Toledo, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Tragedy does not automati-

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cally occur with the collision of two goods—it occurs when this collision, *or* some other necessary but painful choice, is imposed upon a certain individual. The protagonist must have predominantly strong qualities (usually identified with the moral "good" of the era in which the tragedy is written) with one or a few flaws. The choice presented him by fate must strike the Achilles' heel of his character—Macbeth's choice between "good" metaphysical spirits and ordinary morality would have created no conflict in the mind of Duncan; it seemed especially created to tempt the ambitious Macbeth. . . .

Consider an imaginary tragic situation: a woman must choose between the good of attending a religious rite which her religion demands she attend upon pain of "mortal" sin, and the alternate good of staying home and tending her sick child. Suppose she chooses to attend the religious rite and her child dies while she is gone, whereupon she denounces her church and lives out her life in bleak and bitter defiance of all her former religion's tenets, finally dying in a state of despair. Where is the tragedy here? The collision of goods was certainly present.

What this would-be tragedy lacks is a protagonist of noble (to use an antiquated word . . .) character. For tragedy's mark is the glory of man which it demonstrates. Part of man's glory is his ability to have resolve "when nothing can follow from resolve." But an equal part of man's glory consists of his ability to triumph over life's negative factors, to triumph over the forces within himself which make him a prey to the choice presented him. Man triumphs by finding resolve and reasons for resolve solely within the confines of his own character, flawed as it may be, thus affirming man's individual possibilities for glory. (It follows that Christian tragedy, like Christian existentialism, is a distorted variety.) In order to find resolve, the protagonist of the tragedy must have a strong character, while in order to suffer conflict from the choice presented him by fate he must not be perfect.

There are, then, the protagonist, fate, which presents the exact situation which will cause conflict in the individual protagonist, and the situation itself. Tragedy thus cannot reside in the situation alone, as Mr. Abel holds. . . .

(Mrs.) Margaret S. Riebman
Charleston, Illinois

Mr. Abel *writes:*

May I answer all of my critics by pointing out that in my essay on the tragic sense of life, I merely introduced a number of themes which I hope to develop in separate pieces. Obviously I did not do anything like justice to the problems presented by *Macbeth* in the one or two paragraphs I devoted to that tragedy.

But to Mr. Mirelman, who was kind enough to praise my piece, I want to say this: In the very quote he cites from Unamuno it is evident that Unamuno takes the optimistic view that pain is of some utility: ". . . for only through suffering does one become a man." And I still insist that Unamuno's argument for immortality commits him to a certain optimism. Pain may be constant in life, but I think most of us would rather live and suffer than die. Hopelessness (despite Dante) is for many of us more closely connected with the prospect of annihilation than with the prospect of continuing pain, even the pain of hell. Besides, for Unamuno, pain is at least *thrilling*. Now I don't think this is always the case. Finally, I don't think Unamuno's notion of pain a good one, philosophically speaking. I much prefer, for example, Max Scheler's view that pain occurs when one whole is sacrificed to another whole.

To Mr. Hochman, I want to say this: If he does belong to the kind of community he describes, and if, in this community, the tragic sense is constant, then he, like others in there, has little need for the masterpieces of Sophocles, Shakespeare, or Racine. The function of the art of tragedy, I assume, is to supply what experience cannot normally supply: the tragic sense.

And to Mrs. Margaret S. Riebman: I never said that tragedy ever occurs *automatically*. And I remarked that in the Greek world the collision of two goods was made inevitable only for persons of superior character, who had what I called "a superior experience of life." Now as to the instance you cite of a woman torn between attending to her sick child or attending a religious rite: here the choice is precisely untragic, though it might be difficult. The point is that the woman in question can make a choice which might not be fatal. Her child is not *fated* to die if she attends the religious rite, which shows there is no essential contradiction between being religious and being a mother. Now there was, I

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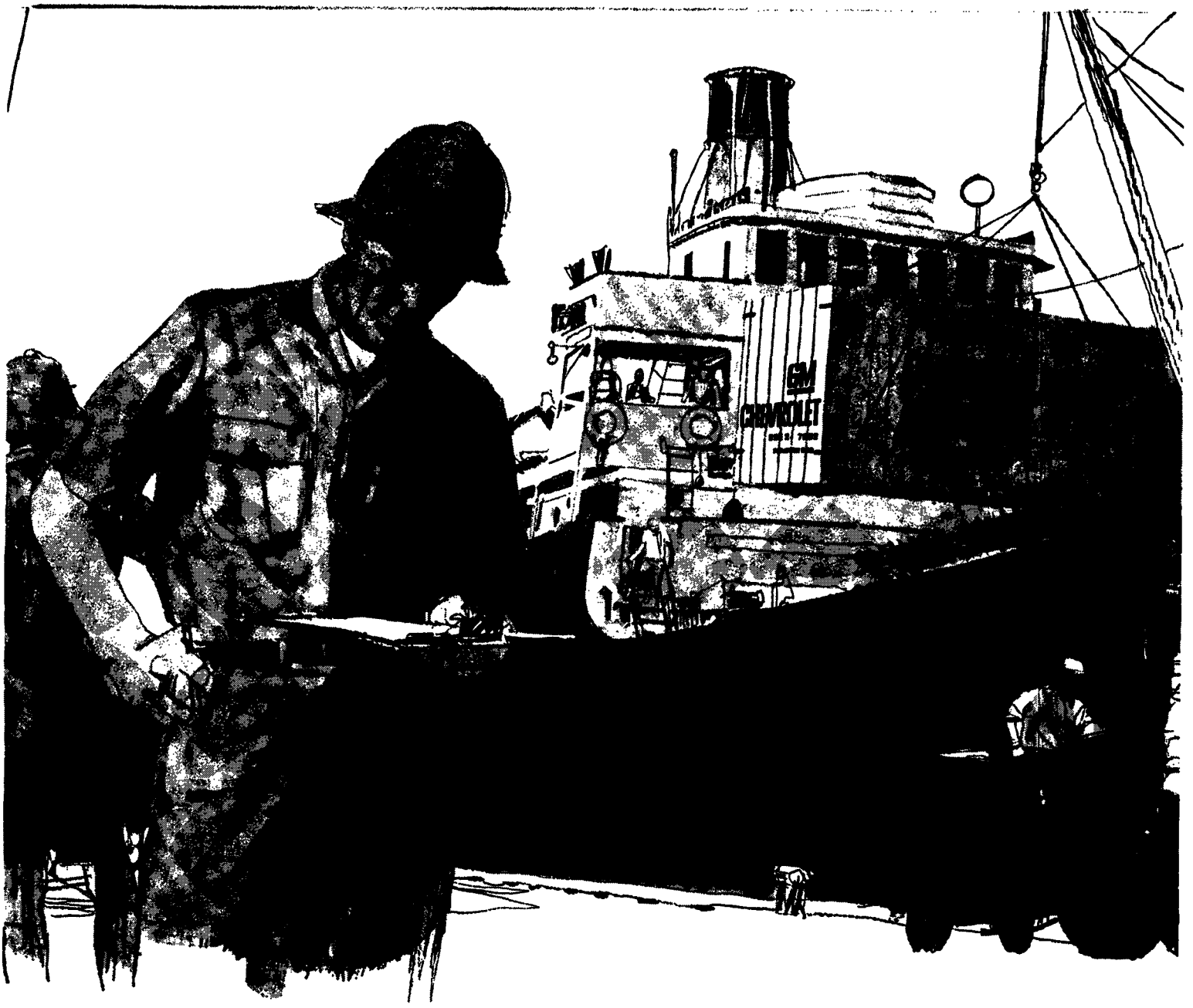


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claim, an essential contradiction in the Greek world for superior individuals between the family and the state—that is to say, the *Polis*.

## For the Record

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

For some time I have intended to write a letter commending Professor Richard Bernstein's discerning review of my book, *Reason and Conduct* [June 1963]. In my judgment it is the best review of my book extant; and some time, not long hence, I feel bound to try to make my own philosophical peace with it.

HENRY DAVID AIKEN
Dept. of Philosophy
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

## Two Protests

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I was very sorry indeed to read I. J. Singer's story ["Converts," December 1964], not only because of its cynical portrayal of both the Jews and Gentiles, but also because the portrayal, allowing for exaggeration and caricature, is not true.

The Mission in the story is described as Anglican, and the only Anglican Mission that has worked in Warsaw is ours (which, being a "Low Church" would certainly have no crucifix . . .). Records of our work in Warsaw are available in this office for anyone to see. . . .

Jews, in varying degrees, dislike our Society and do all they can to combat its work. Quite right, too, but we in our evangelism and Jews in their resisting must use methods worthy of the God we both serve.

(REV.) W. A. CURTIS
General Secretary
The Church's Ministry among the Jews
London, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I. J. Singer's story, "Converts," was not up to your usual standard of fairness in dealing with matters of Jewish-Christian relationships. While it would no doubt be possible to find concrete examples of instances and situations as described in the story, in general the kind of stereotyped image of missions and converts which the story contains is in the long run harmful. . . .

May I therefore suggest that stories of this kind . . . be replaced by attempts to understand and be fair also to those with whom one disagrees. . . .

ANKER GJERDING
Secretary
Committee on Church and the Jewish People
Geneva, Switzerland

## Is the *Times* out of Joint?

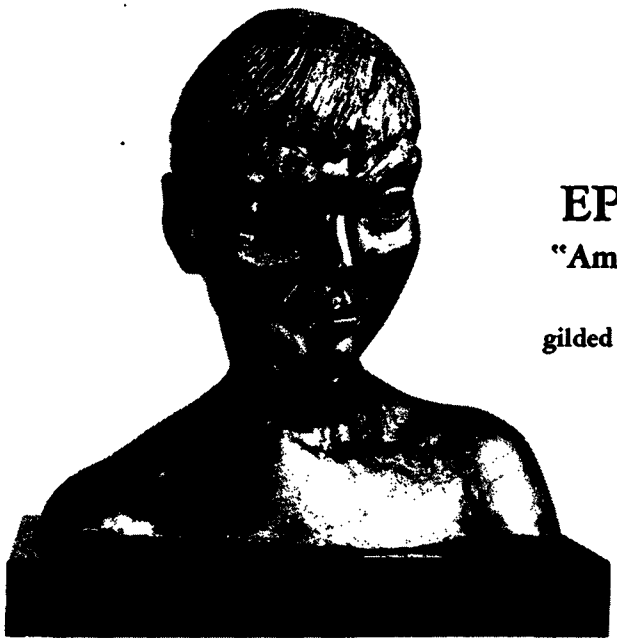
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

George Lichtheim's criticism of the American press and the American Left ["MLF & Other Problems," January] can only be applied to Britain in spades. . . . Except for reading about some new gaucherie on the part of "Elbie Jay," one finds almost nothing in the truncated British papers about America except daily front-page coverage of the latest catastrophe in Alabama, generally covered from at least two points of view: the first by a male reporter implying the natural moral superiority of the English, and the second by a woman suggesting how hard it all is on the poor children.

The one honorable exception to all this is the *Economist*, which he pastes, and which is the organ, I suppose, of those whose "spiritual home [is] the United States." One depends on shipments of old issues of the New York *Times* to find out what is happening in the world, since here one gets vast amounts of interpretation, and precious little information.

The anti-American paranoia of which the *New Statesman* seems to have purged itself has now drifted into the popular press. The caricatures of Americans in the *Evening Standard* are now so similar to those in *Pravda* that they could be interchangeable: and this is a true-blue Tory paper!

So far as the suggestion goes that American liberals shed their dishonesty and call themselves Labourites—the Labour party in Britain is a conservative workingmen's club now, unable to move for fear of offending one of its own vested interests. The stagnation of political life is as much due to the class base of the two major parties as anything else, and commiting oneself to the absurd conservatism of Labour seems hardly any better than taking the Tories seriously. . . . It doesn't matter who governs Britain now: neither party is willing or able to do the radical job that the *Econ-*



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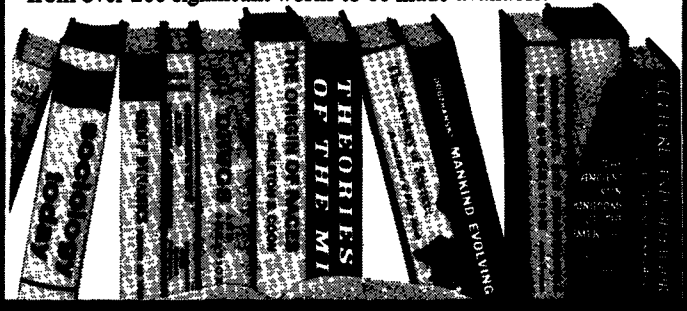


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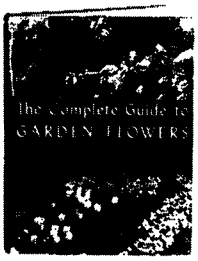


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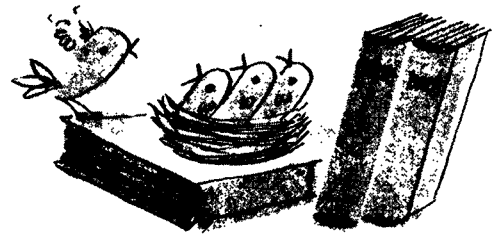

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*omist* has called for. And so Mr. Lichtheim's frustrations are not with America, but with a Britain which is simply more decadent than he is capable of allowing.

(DR.) DAVID RUSH
London, England

MR. LICHTHEIM writes:

I did not criticize either "the American Left" (is there such a thing?) or "the American press." I pointed out—what most of my New York acquaintances seem to have discovered for themselves—that the overseas news coverage of the New York *Times* is inadequate. This has nothing to do with its ideology. It is just a matter of professional competence—regrettably lacking in what is sometimes claimed to be the world's greatest paper (actually only its biggest and most long-winded). If Mr. Rush wants to know what a competently edited daily paper looks like, he should spend a week with the London *Daily Telegraph:* a conservative and pro-American journal whose editorials are unlikely to disturb his patriotic composure.

Mr. Rush's other observations—about liberalism, the Labour party, British decadence, and so on—however interesting or even well-founded, have nothing to do with the points I raised. But since he has brought it up, let me assure him I am quite familiar with the faults of the British press: including the *Economist,* whose standing among informed readers is today not quite as high as it was ten or fifteen years ago. I am talking about the "quality" press. The *Evening Standard* is a popular tabloid, not to be mentioned in the same breath. If Mr. Rush extends his researches he will discover that this Beaverbrook paper was *always* anti-American. The reason is that its owner was a Canadian, descendant of those wicked Tories, the Empire Loyalists. So there is yet another species of anti-Americanism: life is indeed hard, especially for the righteous.

## Jewish Opinion

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a non-Jew interested in the behavior of major American groups, I have been struck by the interchange between Melvin Tumin and various colleagues, originating in *Judaism* and carried by Milton Himmelfarb into the pages of COMMENTARY ["How We Are," Jan.].

Some of Tumin's generalizations about his fellow Jews seem curious coming from a supposedly systematic, empirically oriented social scientist. They fly in the face of overwhelming survey evidence, going back as far as the first Gallup surveys in the mid-30's. If Tumin had chosen even at random any national survey of the last thirty years by Gallup, Roper, the Survey Research Center, the National Opinion Research Center, or the like, he would have discovered . . . Jewish, as compared with non-Jewish, replies significantly more liberal, tolerant of ideas and cultures different from one's own, internationalist, etc.

For example, such tabulations of Jews' and of non-Jews' replies in national surveys would have told Mr. Tumin, *inter alia,* that less than 10 per cent of Jews who voted last November cast their ballots for Goldwater, compared with almost 40 per cent of non-Jews and an even higher percentage of non-Jewish whites; and that large majorities have voted for the more liberal of the two major Presidential candidates in every election since the first surveys on the subject in late 1936. Jews have been approximately two-fifths as likely as other whites to feel that the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were going "too far" toward pushing equal rights for Negroes, to oppose FEPC, fair housing laws, and passage of the Civil Rights Act (just prior to its passage), and to feel that the federal government should stay out of the issue of desegregation in this country. Depending on how the query was posed and the particular type of immigration suggested, Jews have been 40 per cent or more inclined than non-Jews to favor liberalization of immigration. Similarly, Jews have been more apt than non-Jews to favor the arguments of trade unions against those of management, to have basically favorable images of trade unions, to approve of proposed federal participation in medical care of the aged and the underprivileged, expansion of social security benefits, and increased federal aid to education. In 1954, when more Americans had fundamentally favorable impressions of Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin than had unfavorable ones of him, only one Jew out of six regarded him favorably. . . . Likewise, surveys about permitting Communists to publish and speak in the mass media, allowing socialists or atheists to teach in schools, and other aspects of civil liberties have found Jews invariably more tolerant than any other major ethnic or religious group. . . .

Admittedly, Jews have been concentrated more than other Americans among the better educated, the more prosperous, the urban, and the professional, managerial, and proprietary occupational groups, those where support of multilateral international commitments and collaboration, and of civil rights and liberties have been most prevalent. When these factors have been controlled, that is when Jews have been compared with only those non-Jews who are of similar status, differences in the direction of more liberal attitudes among Jews than non-Jews on social welfare—and most other issues of domestic economic policy involving transfers of wealth from haves to have-nots—have usually widened over those evident when Jews have been compared with other Americans in general. Differences in attitudes toward civil rights and civil liberties, immigration, and international relations have narrowed, but they have still remained statistically significant at a high level of confidence. Even in the South, where Jews have on the whole been more conservative on most of these matters than in the North, a recent study directed by the undersigned (to be published this spring) discovered that Jews were significantly more liberal, favorable to equalitarian race relations, and favorable to international cooperation . . . than were Gentiles of similar income and occupation in a dozen Southern sample communities. . . .

I would agree with Mr. Tumin that many Jews express opinions and manifest actions which are more conservative than most of the readers of this periodical would prefer. Admittedly their actions tend often to be less liberal than their expressed opinions to survey interviewers would lead one to expect. But pragmatic liberals interested in finding allies in efforts to achieve a more democratic domestic society and a more compassionate and internationally cooperative foreign policy know from wide experience that such fellow spirits are more likely to be of Jewish than any other ethnic or religious origin.

ALFRED O. HERO, JR.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

[*More correspondence on Mr. Himmelfarb's piece will appear in our next issue.*]

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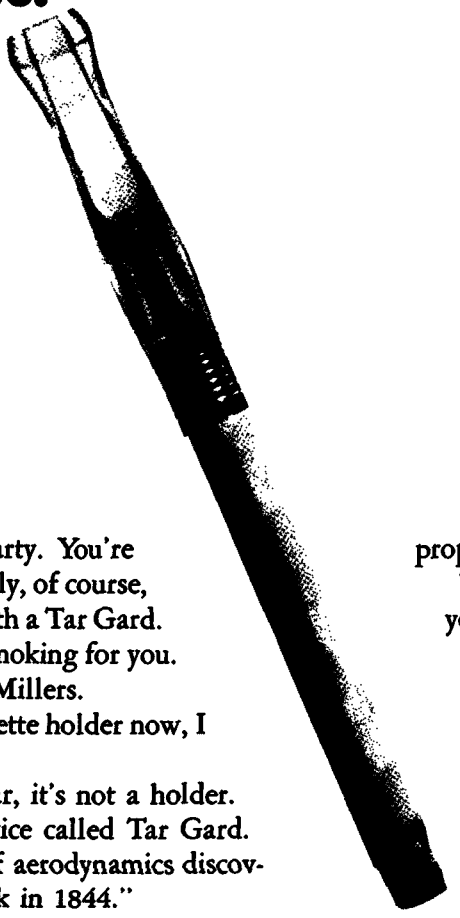
# Wow your friends with a dissertation on the effectiveness of the Venturi tube.



It's a lively cocktail party. You're feeling pretty good. But only, of course, because you're smoking with a Tar Gard. It takes the worry out of smoking for you. You're chatting with the Millers.

She says, "Using a cigarette holder now, I see? Pretty bourgeois."

You reply, "But my dear, it's not a holder. It's a unique filtering device called Tar Gard. It's based on a principle of aerodynamics discovered by G. B. Venturi back in 1844."

Two couples turn around and continue to talk as they listen.

"Let me show you how it works," you say in a clearly pedagogical tone.

"The smoke is drawn through this pinpoint opening, races through a tiny chamber and reaches a velocity of 200 miles an hour."

"Were you a physics major?" a competitor chides.

But you continue, not missing a beat, "Leaving the chamber, the smoke is hurled against this little barrier with such impact that the heavier hot tars are literally knocked out of the smoke."

"Interesting," says a knowing unknown face from over your shoulder.

"Yes, but the most interesting thing is that this little invention can distinguish between the high-temperature tars in cigarette smoke and the cool properties that give a cigarette its flavor."

"Simply amazing," says an admirer, brushing your arm.

Your audience continues to grow. And you with it.

"Objective laboratory tests show that Tar Gard removes up to 85 per cent of the hot tars from both non-filter and filter cigarettes. As you probably know, the Surgeon General's Report on Smoking says the high-temperature tars contain the highest concentration of carcinogenic agents."

Someone else probes, "How many cigarettes can you smoke with a Tar Gard?"

You reply confidently, "Well, Tar Gard is a permanent device requiring no cartridges or replacements. Every once in awhile you take it apart and wipe it clean with a tissue or run it under the hot water tap."

"Where did you get it?" a dozen faces seem to ask.

"You can buy them at most drug stores and tobacco counters," and anticipating the next question, you then add, "... for just $2.95."

Your audience is silent, but intent. You have a new cigarette in your Tar Gard. Gracefully, you raise it to your lips, draw easily, exhale, then speak, "As I was saying, I don't think Herzog really considered..."

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# BONN, CAIRO, JERUSALEM:
# THE TRIPLE CRISIS

*WALTER Z. LAQUEUR*

LONDON, APRIL 1

IN RECENT MONTHS German-Jewish, and German-Israeli, relations have become almost inextricably entangled in wider issues: they can no longer be explained without constant reference to German domestic and foreign policy, to the Middle Eastern conflict, and indeed to East-West relations in general. The roots of the present situation—which may be described as a confluence of several different crises—are embedded in events that took place in the early 50's. The first important milestone in German-Israeli relations after the war was the restitution agreement signed in Luxemburg in September 1952, under which the Adenauer government promised to supply Israel with goods to the value of about one billion dollars over a period of thirteen years (the last shipment has only just been made). Because of the widespread feeling in Israel that accepting "blood money" from those who had been instrumental in killing one-third of the Jewish people was an act of criminal indecency, a gross insult to the memory of the victims, it was only by a tiny majority that the Knesset empowered the government to enter into negotiations with the West Germans about restitution. At the same time, Moshe Sharett, then Prime Minister, made it absolutely clear that the recognition of Germany was out of the question.

Adenauer's government, too, was under some pressure; at one stage (on November 8, 1952) it received an ultimatum from the Arab League warning that unless the restitution agreement was shelved within forty-eight hours, the Arab countries would institute a total economic boycott against Germany. The ultimatum was ignored, whereupon the Arabs put forward another demand: they, too, wanted reparations from Germany—about a billion dollars over ten years. Some German industrialists were very apprehensive, but unnecessarily, as it later appeared. Despite the restitution agreement with Israel, Germany's trade with Egypt and Syria doubled within the following decade, and with Iraq and Jordan it quadrupled.

WALTER Z. LAQUEUR is director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London (the Wiener Library) and editor of *Survey*. His newest book, *Russia and Germany: A Century of Conflict*, will be published later this year by Little, Brown.

Even after the restitution agreement had been signed, relations between Israel and Germany were restricted to the minimum: for years Israeli passports were stamped "Not valid for travel in Germany." Gradually, however, a change set in, though for a long time it was more pronounced in official circles than among the general public. Those responsible for Israeli defense were the first to realize that, however horrible the recent past, the new state had to devote all its efforts to countering the immediate menace to its existence which came from the neighboring Arab countries. And the threat became even greater after the massive Soviet arms deliveries to Egypt got under way in 1955. Israel urgently needed help if it was to survive—and there was no surfeit of potential helpers.

The Germans are a methodical people; they had engineered the "final solution" in a systematic way, and now they set out to deliver the goods to Israel in an equally systematic manner. The ships laden with German capital goods began to call at Haifa regularly and unfailingly, becoming an important —ultimately a decisive—factor in the building up of the country. Today the Israeli fleet is almost entirely "made in Germany," as are its modern railway equipment, the big steel foundry near Acre, and many other enterprises. During the 50's and early 60's, about one-third of investment goods imported into Israel came from Germany. Trade between the two countries also increased, and West Germany now takes third place in Israeli foreign trade (immediately after the United States and Britain). In addition to all this, many individual Israelis received restitution privately.

Gradually restrictions on Israeli travel to Germany were abolished; what was probably more significant, German visitors were soon arriving in Israel. At first, these were individual Germans who had helped Jews during the war or were of some other outstanding merit from the Jewish point of view. But it was not long before the politicians also began coming—Heuss and Dehler, Gerstenmayer and even Franz Josef Strauss—as well as German scientists and churchmen, trade unionists and young people, many thousands of them, eager to see the kibbutzim, the Dead Sea, and Eilat. German-language books swamped the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem bookshops; the film censorship board



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was somewhat more reluctant, but if it balked at German movies, it had no such qualms about those made in Austria.

At the time of the Luxemburg agreement in 1952, Adenauer had suggested an exchange of ambassadors, but Israel had declined. Four years later the situation had completely changed. Germany was now much stronger and Israel needed political as well as economic assistance. In March 1956 Israel indicated that, while it could not take the initiative in establishing diplomatic relations, a West German approach would be welcomed. When the news got around, Nasser declared that he would immediately recognize East Germany in retaliation, and the West German government hastily retreated.

This pattern was to repeat itself countless times in the next nine years; nor did a half-hearted attempt by the late John Foster Dulles to bring Germany and Israel together meet with success. Inside Germany there was considerable pressure for the normalization of relations with Israel, but the foreign ministry, supported by the Bonn coalition parties, was strongly opposed; privately it was explained that the tense situation in the Middle East would only be aggravated by a "hasty decision." But the real reason was, of course, the Hallstein doctrine, according to which West Germany, and West Germany alone, is the legitimate spokesman for all Germany. Bonn made it known that it would break off relations with any country that recognized Communist East Germany, regarding it as an unfriendly act calculated to deepen the division of Germany. There was, not surprisingly, one exception to this rule—Moscow. But Bonn refused to make diplomatic contact with the other East European countries or China, and it broke off relations with Yugoslavia and Cuba when these recognized the Ulbricht regime.

The Hallstein doctrine undoubtedly helped to slow down international recognition of that regime, but gradually it became a trap for those who had invented it. West Germany laid itself open to every kind of political and economic blackmail. The doctrine made it possible for almost any Asian or African country to get grants or gifts from Bonn, simply by indicating that it might recognize Pankow. (A few months ago, for example, the Syrian Prime Minister virtually gave an order to the Germans to underwrite the cost of the Euphrates dam, a giant construction project.) The whole matter has become largely farcical because quite a few Arab, Asian, and African countries have close relations with East Germany anyway; there are, for instance, East German Consuls-General in Cairo and Baghdad, in Rangoon and Colombo, who have the personal status of ambassadors—but may not display their country's flag on their official cars. In addition, many leading East German personalities have already paid official visits to these countries. But the principle of the Hallstein doctrine was at stake and the Germans were unable to find a way out of a prison they had erected themselves.

## II

THE ATTITUDES underlying German-Israeli relations have been complex on both sides. So far as Israel is concerned, it would have been surprising, not to say unnatural, if the former inmates of extermination camps now living in Israel, along with many other victims of the crimes committed by Germans, had not followed developments in Germany after 1945 with the gravest misgivings. Germany had once more become a strong power with a fairly sizable army of its own. What guarantee was there that Hitler's successors would not again emerge as the masters of Europe? What about the constant reports of a resurgence of neo-Nazism in the *Bundesrepublik*? What about the ex-Nazis in high places and the acquittal of those who had murdered thousands of Jews? Was it not obvious that the German national character was unlikely to change? If other nations had a short memory, these Jews were not likely to forget "what Amalek did to thee." There were many who decided never to set foot on German soil again, and who bitterly opposed the new ties between Israel and the *Bundesrepublik*. Their reading of recent developments in Germany might have been wrong; there probably was (as Ben Gurion stressed) a streak of racialism in it. But *Staatsraison*—even in a case like this, where Germany was willing and able to supply Israel free of charge with the arms it so urgently needed—hardly ever affects the emotions and reasoning of ordinary people; theirs was a natural reaction to the terrible holocaust in which a third of the Jewish people had perished.

Yet there is more than one public opinion in Israel, and for a German observer the conflicting Israeli attitudes must have been a cause of considerable bewilderment. On the one hand, there was undisguised enmity, likely to culminate any moment in a "Hate Germany" campaign; on the other, there were those thousands of Israelis who applied for German citizenship (because the Israeli passport was a much less convenient and useful travel document). There were the thousands who actually did return, to participate in the *Wirtschaftswunder* or to enjoy their restitution payments at a more favorable rate. There were the hundreds of Israeli students at German universities, the research workers and professors, the musicians, painters, and poets, the businessmen, consultants, ex-army officers, and detectives who had taken up permanent residence in West Germany. The emergence of Jewish communities in Germany after all that had happened seemed unacceptable to many. But at the same time West Germany became the second most promising hunting ground (after the United States) for all those official and unofficial emissaries, often self-appointed, trying to raise money for schools, hospi-

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tals, synagogues, and other, sometimes spurious, activities in Israel. Between the proponents of a full boycott and those who practiced full fraternization, Israeli attitudes toward Germany have ranged over the whole spectrum.

German attitudes to Israel have been similarly complex. The press and public have been sympathetic toward Israel; even third-rate Israeli writers, artists, and other such visitors could count on a receptive hearing. A whole library of Israeliana (including a great deal of rubbish) has been turned out during the last decade. For years it was very fashionable to go to a kibbutz, and many German students have applied for a year's stay or longer at the Hebrew University. But Germany, too, has more than one public opinion; it is doubtful whether and to what extent the friendly press comments ever represented the German *pays réel.* In right-wing circles there were always complaints that the Jews were "insatiable" in their demands, and assertions that there was a limit to Germany's obligations. There was also some sympathy for Nasser even when he put the pressure on Bonn. The line taken by Giselher Wirsing, the editor of the influential Protestant weekly, *Christ und Welt,* is representative of an important sector of German opinion. A traditional nationalist, easily captivated by strong men (Hitler in the 30's, Nasser in the 60's), Herr Wirsing is no doubt genuinely convinced that relations between Bonn and Cairo are more important than Germany's ties with Jerusalem. In one of his recent editorials, he predicted that Germany would suffer another "Stalingrad on the Nile" unless it changed its attitude toward the Arabs. Wirsing has an unfortunate political past to live down, but similar views are, after all, voiced from time to time by diplomatic and political commentators who were not associated in the past with Hitler and Goebbels. The Arab propagandists, too, have been at work in Bonn. Some of them are extremely able, but on the whole they have not been very successful over the last decade: they did manage to induce some of the biggest electrical firms (such as Telefunken and AEG) not to trade with Israel, but otherwise they have no startling achievements to their credit.

## III

The philo-Semitism prevalent in the press, the radio, and some official circles has been put to a severe strain in recent weeks when even philo-Semites began saying that Israeli demands were excessive and that, twenty years after the end of the war, a line should be drawn. *Die Zeit,* the leading left-wing liberal weekly, reminded its readers that the *Bundesrepublik* had paid Israel about $750 million, individual Jews about $4.5 billion, and the claims conference about $125 million. Was it really fair, in view of these huge sums, to argue that West Germany was "morally bankrupt" because it had just proposed to pay Israel $25 million in cash rather than supplying arms for that sum?

The story behind this particular aspect of the crisis in Israeli-German relations goes back to 1962, when Shimon Peres, director general of the Israeli ministry of defense, concluded an agreement with the then West German defense minister, according to which Germany was to supply Israel with some $70 million worth of selected arms and equipment. This included 150 tanks, 50 airplanes, several helicopters, 2 submarines and some other naval craft. There was, on the part of the Germans, genuine willingness to help Israel, but there were also, no doubt, other motives. Bonn had not yet extended diplomatic recognition to Israel and the arms deal was seen as a form of compensation. Probably it was also meant to placate the Israelis who, for a long time, had been complaining about the activities of German rocket experts in Egypt which the Bonn government had been unable to stop—partly because it had no constitutional power to recall these men (some of whom had in any case adopted Egyptian citizenship) and partly because Washington did not want to see the Germans in Cairo replaced by Soviet scientists.

The sums and quantities Germany agreed to send Israel were not exactly staggering, even for a small country; Nasser, for instance, has in recent years received Soviet and Eastern bloc arms valued at between $750 million and $1 billion (including 1500 tanks, 500 planes, 45 torpedo boats, 1,000 ground-to-air rockets, etc.). Nor was the arms deal with Israel a unique departure for Germany—Bonn was already giving military aid to a number of Asian and African countries, including a few Arab ones like Sudan. What irked Nasser, understandably from his point of view, was the fact that Germany was supplying these arms to Israel very cheaply, some of them apparently at a nominal price, whereas Egypt had to mortgage its cotton crop to pay for its purchases from the Soviet Union (though there were bargains in that arms deal, too). From a purely military standpoint, the German-Israeli arms deal was of decisive importance neither for Israel nor to Nasser. But Nasser, convinced that of all the Western powers Germany was the one that could least afford to give comfort to his enemies—and probably also prodded by the Russians—decided to prepare for a trial of strength.

The great opportunity came early this year, when it was announced that Walter Ulbricht, the East German leader, would pay a state visit to Egypt. Bonn lodged emphatic protests and threatened to cut off economic aid if Egypt received the "arch enemy of German unity," but Nasser refused to budge. Instead he went over to the counter-attack. Bonn, he declared, had broken faith by supplying the Arabs' mortal foe with arms. He, Nasser, could very well do without help from Bonn—only the West Germans would suffer. Egypt, supported by all other Arab and North African countries, would immediately counter any

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further unfriendly West German action by extending diplomatic recognition to East Germany. Nasser's aim at that stage was primarily political, not military—85 per cent of the promised arms had already been delivered to Israel. What he wanted, as he subsequently explained in press interviews, was to isolate Israel, to torpedo the "German-Israeli alliance."

Bonn was terror-stricken for a few weeks. German political leaders claimed they had never been told about the arms deal with Israel. There had been press reports, to be sure, but the matter had never come before parliament. The government immediately called a halt to deliveries, declaring that no more arms would be sent to "zones of tension"—as if arms would be needed anywhere but in "zones of tension." There was a tremendous outcry in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, there were protests in London, demonstrations in New York. To appease Jewish public opinion, Prime Minister Erhard asked Prime Minister Eshkol to accept payment in cash for the outstanding 15 per cent of the deliveries. Eshkol refused and the protests continued.

The arms supplies had been stopped, but Nasser was not to be bought off so cheaply; he went ahead with preparations to receive Ulbricht. In the circumstances, Bonn felt that it had to cut off economic aid to Egypt, even if from a strictly legal point of view the Ulbricht visit was not the equivalent of full diplomatic recognition of the East German regime. Ulbricht landed in Alexandria and was welcomed very enthusiastically. Germany has had an excellent reputation in the Arab world for many decades because it was not a colonialist power, because it was anti-British, and because of Nazi policy toward the Jews. True, there had been some bad Germans like Adenauer, but Ulbricht, in Egyptian eyes, was a German in the right tradition, he was a "good German" (as a *Guardian* correspondent reported from Cairo). Ulbricht made the most of his visit, damning both imperialists and Israel; he was rewarded with the "collar of the Nile," while on his wife was bestowed the "order of perfection." To add a few pinpricks, the Egyptians arrested several West German residents, commercial agents, and the owner of a racing stable.

By now, Erhard was extremely angry indeed and wanted to cut off relations with Egypt altogether. But half of his cabinet—the foreign minister and the Free Democrats—opposed him. The American and British envoys also counseled moderation; as a compromise, it was decided to recognize Israel at long last. A Christian Democratic member of parliament was sent to Jerusalem to negotiate with the Israeli government while outcries of dismay and indignation went up in all Arab capitals. Many Arabs realized that Nasser had gone too far, seriously miscalculating the situation, but on the other hand they felt they had to back Egypt as a matter of pan-Arab solidarity. Bonn was not particularly worried by Nasser's threat not to pay back the $225 million he owed the Germans; but there was apprehension, much of it no doubt exaggerated, over the political implications. Most of the editorials in the German press favored a tough line toward Cairo, but most of the letters from readers pleaded for understanding of Nasser: after all, Israel was as much a thorn in the flesh of the Arabs as East Germany was to the Bonn regime. Meanwhile, the head of the Syrian junta declared that the Arabs would have to do something about Israel fairly soon; in four or five years it would be too late, because by that time there would be a state of missile parity.

Whether there will be war or (relative) peace in the Middle East now depends mainly on whether, and to what extent, Lebanon and Syria will go ahead with their plans to divert the waters of the Jordan. The summer of 1965 may indeed be (as Nasser has predicted) a very hot one in the Middle East, but the many factors involved make political speculation a risky pastime. The course of German policy, on the other hand, seems to be set. Short of some last minute hitch, ambassadors will be exchanged between Israel and the *Bundesrepublik* some time in May—whereupon most Arab governments will probably withdraw their envoys from Bonn. Some will extend full diplomatic recognition to East Germany, others will merely utter threatening noises.* If all goes well the Arab envoys will be back in the West German capital by 1966. When Nasser began to realize that he had overreached himself, his anger turned against those Arab countries that were not willing to follow him all the way. They, not Germany and Israel, may well become the main victims of Egyptian political warfare in coming months.

## IV

GERMAN EXPERIENCE in the Middle East shows, not exactly for the first time in history, the dangers of exposing oneself to blackmail. Such situations may be inevitable from time to time and they have to be faced with a great deal of resolution. Germany, admittedly, was operating from a position of weakness, but so was Nasser, most of whose successes have been achieved not by Egypt's political or military strength, but by first-rate bluffing.

The cardinal error, from the German point of view, was in not extending diplomatic recognition to Israel between 1956 and 1960. Nasser would certainly have protested, he would have threatened, demanding loans or gifts in return, but eventually he would have put up with it. Bonn, however, did not want to take any risk and thus gave Nasser a veto on its Israeli policy, which

* Early last month, the New York *Times* reported that according to highly reliable sources Nasser will in all likelihood not recognize East Germany after Israel and West Germany exchange ambassadors.—ED.

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caused great and growing complications. Some of the blame must be laid to ex-Chancellor Adenauer, whose hesitations helped create a problem which should never have arisen. Even so, Adenauer would have been better qualified to deal with Nasser than his successor, precisely because he was "the strong man" and, as such, respected in Cairo. Nasser knew that with Adenauer he could go so far and no further; his attitude toward the new men in Bonn was different. For among Adenauer's successors the idea prevailed that a more elastic foreign policy was needed; Germany had to be friends with the whole world. At the same time there was a great deal of internal intrigue and rivalry among the higher echelons in Bonn. The result was confusion and weakness in both foreign and domestic affairs.

Economically, Germany does not stand to lose much from a break with Nasser: exchanges between Germany and all eleven Arab countries amount only to about 3 per cent of Germany's foreign trade. In the long run, considering Egypt's economic prospects, German investments and property are almost certain to be lost anyway, and the long-term loan will never be repaid. A break with Egypt would, in fact, be a great blessing, but this, of course, is not the way individual German businessmen see it. Their profits are guaranteed by the state, i.e., the taxpayer.

Politically it should have been clear that the Hallstein doctrine had to be jettisoned immediately if it could be maintained only by violating treaty obligations at the cost of great public humiliation and an admission of extreme weakness. (Privately, many German politicians would agree, but no one knows how to cut this Gordian knot.)

In the wake of the Nasser affair, there was much soul searching and even more resentment in West Germany. Reactions cut across party lines, except for the Free Democrats who do not "want their policy dictated by Washington and Tel Aviv." There was a minority which said that Germany had a moral obligation to stand by Israel, that nothing was to be gained by appeasing dictators, and that Nasser was, in any case, anti-Western and should not be rewarded by concessions. But the majority thought that Israel should not have gotten arms in the first place. Israel ought to be given maximum assistance, but not beyond the point where such help might jeopardize vital German national interests (i.e., reunification). There was also much resentment against the Western allies who had encouraged Germany to deliver arms to Israel because they did not want to endanger their own good relations with Egypt; now they were reluctant to give Bonn even a minimum of support. These rebukes included the French who were, admittedly, in an indecent and wholly misguided hurry to replace Bonn on the Egyptian market. There was much resentment against Israel —how could the Jews be so ungrateful after all that had been done for them! Figures and statistics and delivery quotas were cited, which proved, if anything, only that the Jewish property in Germany looted by the Nazis, or at least much of it, had been restored to its owners or their heirs—hardly an occasion for public self-congratulation on the part of the Germans. There were even well-meant warnings that anti-Semitism would increase in Germany if the Jews were going to show so little understanding of Germany's difficulties (as if a recurrence of anti-Semitism in Germany would harm anyone but the Germans).

Pusillanimous as the German performance was in the early stages of the affair, much of the responsibility lies with the Western allies, in particular the United States and Britain. Germany is not a major producer of arms; if Israel made an arms deal with Bonn, it was mainly because of American and British reluctance (or even refusal) to give arms to Israel themselves. In the circumstances, the protests of American Jewish War Veterans or of the British Board of Deputies—not to mention those who declared a private boycott on German goods—though well meant, were at least partly misplaced. It is more awkward to protest against one's own government than against the Germans, but there is no denying that the British record of support for Israeli defense has been less impressive than the German. Britain has delivered a lot of weapons to Arab countries in recent years, but hardly anything at all to Israel, except for two old submarines (for which, incidentally, the West Germans paid part of the cost). Washington has reluctantly given some arms to Israel, but only a fraction of what Egypt has received from the Eastern bloc. Western reaction was as confused and uncoordinated as Germany's; there should have been a certain division of labor in the provision of help for Israel against the Egyptian-Soviet build-up, but there was none.

Jewish and Israeli reaction to the German decision to stop the arms deliveries to "zones of tension" was expectedly violent, but it was perhaps out of proportion. The arms still to be supplied by Germany were not of the most modern and sophisticated kind, and could be obtained for hard cash from some other European nations on a strictly commercial basis. But in Israeli eyes this was a matter of principle: one of the most influential European countries had given in easily to Egyptian pressure, and it was the very country that had the greatest obligation of all to stand by Israel—even when it hurt. (Restitution had not been particularly painful.) Out of proportion or not, however, the Israeli reaction had an impact. President Johnson sent Averill Harriman to Jerusalem and there were high-level talks in other places. At the same time there was a demand in Israel and among Jews elsewhere for a re-examination of relations with Germany. There were articles and letters in the Jewish press, meetings, demonstrations, and resolutions, and those who asked for a basic revision

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denied any essential difference between the "new Germany" and the Third Reich. A letter to one of the Israeli papers declared that the Ben Gurion-Peres-Dayan line of a new Germany had helped to bring about the psychological disarmament of the Jews. It had been wrong to take reparations from Germany; it had been wrong to submerge Jewish dignity under *Realpolitik:* "Our ancestors, in their attitude to post-Inquisition Spain, showed more dignity and self-respect than some of us show to post-Hitler Germany."

These were not, and probably were not meant to be, rational comments on the problem; but what happened to the Jews in German-occupied Europe could not be explained in rational terms either. Nevertheless, such comments do show that a fair number of Jews (including quite a few Zionists) are reluctant to accept the implications of Jewish statehood. The suggestion that the Jewish state could and should have reacted as the Spanish Jews did after 1492 would no doubt have appealed to a romantic like Daniel Deronda. But statesmen who carry the responsibility for the security of their country have more urgent things to worry about than dignified gestures. It is not difficult to dismiss considerations of *Realpolitik* from Swiss Cottage or Greenwich Village or other places outside the range of Nasser's missiles. Even some Israelis may argue that a Jewish state which can defend itself against its enemies and safeguard its survival only with the help of the Germans, has no moral justification and might as well disappear. Of the opponents of *Realpolitik,* few are willing to draw these consequences; most have some easy solution to offer that would both make German assistance unnecessary and safeguard Israeli security. These suggestions cover a wide range but they all lack realism and responsibility; they are not serious alternatives. The choices for those who do not abdicate responsibility have been much narrower all along.

## V

THE POLITICAL, military, and economic importance of the Middle East has been overrated in the West for a long time, but there is no question that in certain circumstances and for a limited time the Middle East may again become one of the world's major trouble zones. Some Arab leaders have been hard at work to create precisely such a situation on the assumption (and it is a correct one) that unless there is a major crisis not enough dollars and rubles will come into the area. For a decade now, Nasser has shown great mastery in playing on the largely misplaced fears of the powers, especially in the West, and the story of German-Israeli relations in recent months would be incomplete without a fuller account of his role in the total situation.

The plain fact is that Egypt is now facing bankruptcy. Since Egyptian industry is largely dependent on imports of raw materials and semi-finished products, and since there is a severe shortage of foreign currency, about one-quarter of the country's factories have either had to shut down or curtail production drastically. At the same time (though for different reasons), meat and vegetables have largely disappeared from the shops of Cairo and Alexandria.

Nations, of course, do not cease to exist even if they are hopelessly insolvent. There are, however, degrees of bankruptcy. Like Egypt, Syria and Iraq are poor countries, but the long-term outlook there —granted a minimum of efficient government—is much better, for the simple reason that these are potentially rich countries with untapped resources, and Egypt is not. There are countries in Asia and Africa even poorer than Egypt, but nowhere is there a more striking discrepancy between Gross National Product and political ambition, between zeal for work and will for power, between the expectations of the people and the possibility of satisfying them, than in Egypt. Were it not for the massive help it receives from America, Russia, and West Europe, Nasser's regime could not exist, all the rhetorical bombast notwithstanding. Egyptians would starve, industry would cease to function, and all development projects would have to be shelved.

Thus, to all intents and purposes, Egypt will be indefinitely dependent on support from other countries. This situation could change only if the Egyptian population explosion came to a halt, and if some unforeseen breakthrough were achieved—if, for instance, cheap nuclear energy were to become available for irrigating the desert. But since no such breakthrough is likely to take place in the near future, there is a great and growing temptation for Nasser to seek a solution to Egypt's difficulties outside its own borders. Nasser can claim with much more justice than Hitler did that his people are a *"Volk ohne Raum,"* that they need more room, but past experience—the war against Israel in 1956, the fighting in Yemen during the last two years, and the break-up of the union with Syria—has shown that a big and effective propaganda machine is not in itself enough to defeat other armies. So for almost a decade now Cairo has engaged in a very substantial armament program. Outside Heliopolis, a few miles east of Cairo, dozens of scientists have been busy perfecting "The Victor," "The Conqueror," "The Explorer" —one-and-two stage missiles with a range of up to over 600 miles. Exact figures are not available, but Egypt is believed to be spending between five-hundred million and a billion dollars a year on armaments and other military purposes, representing from 7 to 12 per cent of the GNP, or twice to four times as much as the incomparably more affluent members of NATO spend.

Not surprisingly, Nasser has been sharply criticized for a policy which many Western observers believe has brought his country to the brink of

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ruin. Even the Russians, who, after all, have provided the bulk of Egypt's armaments during the last decade, now feel uneasy about these developments. A Soviet writer recently noted with regret, for example, that Egypt would have made greater economic progress if so large a part of its budgetary resources had not been diverted to military ends:

> In recent years, the UAR has been spending on the requirements of defense and internal security, roughly as much as the total capital invested in the development of industry and power, and considerably more than on education, health, and social services taken together.

All this is quite correct, and yet I find myself in the unaccustomed role of having to defend Nasser against some of his critics. Unless he decides to give up all his political ambitions, what other course is open to him? In his eyes, these military expenses are not unproductive, but likely to yield political and economic profits at some future stage. The same goes for his enormous expenditures on propaganda and subversion abroad—the dozens of big conferences, the lavish state receptions, the *bakshish* paid out to Egyptian agents and friendly politicians all over Africa, the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, Asia and Europe.

Not that orthodox economic doctrine could offer much comfort to Egypt anyway. Would Nasser have received hundreds of millions from Washington had he not created the impression that Egypt was somehow an important country, had he not constantly engaged in anti-Western activities, demonstrating his nuisance value, showing that he was dangerous and had to be bought off at a high price? Nasser's dilemma contains elements of real tragedy which are not usually recognized in the West. Personally incorrupt and as efficient a ruler as Egypt could possibly hope for, he has taken the country through a genuine social and political revolution. The great landowners and industrialists, the pashas and the Levantines have disappeared; land has been redistributed, many new industries developed, and the Aswan Dam may be completed in a few years. Similar achievements in countries like Syria and Iraq would be of great and lasting importance. Egypt, however, is too poor to effect a real "takeoff." Above all, there is that population explosion: every single minute of the day a new Egyptian is born. Labor productivity has remained low: the Egyptians are willing to applaud Nasser at mass meetings, but they show little enthusiasm at work. The steel industry and the other new factories that have been built produce goods which are shoddy and cannot be exported because the high cost of production prevents them from competing with goods from other countries. Nasser's regime has put a ceiling on high incomes, and in theory far more people in Egypt can now afford the good things in life—but there are no good things to buy. A new class has come into being—the officers, the NCO's, and the higher echelons of the bureaucracy. They demand apartments and houses, cars, refrigerators, and washing machines, nice clothes for their wives. But the government cannot deliver the goods, nor can it make any decisive contribution toward raising the standard of living of the rest of the population. Instead of slowly catching up, Egypt is steadily falling further behind the advanced nations.

Nevertheless, a fairly strong case for Nasser could be constructed. He has tried hard, and if he has made mistakes it is unlikely that anyone else would have done better. If a country is very poor, neither capitalism nor Communism seems to work. The economic and social outlook for Egypt is bleak; the country is living on borrowed money, and will soon be unable to pay the interest on its debts, let alone repay the principal. Further loans and grants are not enough; Nasser needs very substantial gifts to stay afloat. Only a short while ago, the Egyptian newspapers announced that in the not-too-distant future Egyptians would fly in their own private airplanes to enjoy a weekend on the Côte d'Azur or in Switzerland. Now there is mounting discontent at home and Nasser's political survival depends upon his ability to supply cars and apartments and refrigerators to the New Class. The economic advisers will tell him that retrenchment is needed all along the line, that Egypt has lived far beyond its means for too long, that it can no longer afford to create the illusion that it is a strong and important nation. For a military leader with tremendous ambitions, for a man who genuinely thinks he has a great mission to fulfill, there is only one way out of this crisis—expansion.

The first and obvious target for attack is Israel, that cancer in the body politic of the Arab nation which he has solemnly vowed to destroy so many times. He is probably right in assuming that no one would help Israel against an Egyptian attack provided the campaign were over in a few weeks. But Israel, he knows, is a hard nut to crack. Once war breaks out, missiles will be used and perhaps other weapons too. The Egyptian missiles were scheduled to be ready in 1966, but this is now doubted by many, and Nasser is not rash enough to take it for granted that Israel has no modern weapons apart from the Hawk ground-to-air missiles. Unless he can be absolutely certain that a surprise blow would damage Israel so irreparably that it would be unable to retaliate, such a blow could means the loss of Cairo, Alexandria, and perhaps other places as well.

While victory over Israel would greatly enhance Nasser's stature among the Arabs, it would not help him to solve the problem of the Egyptian economy, nor could Israel absorb Egypt's surplus population. Libya, needless to say, would be a much less risky target, and Nasser has had his eyes on it for some time, for the revenue from the 40 million tons of oil likely to be produced in the Fezzan this year would be a most welcome addition

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to the Egyptian treasury. Saudia and Kuwait are even more attractive, though attacking them would involve him in conflict with other Arab countries.

Nasser has waited patiently for a longer time than most observers thought he would; he has shown not only a perseverance rare among Arabs, but also fortitude in the face of setbacks. But pressure on him is mounting, and he may be driven into seeking a desperate remedy for Egypt's ills even though he is militarily not yet ready for any target more formidable than Libya. He probably has no masterplan, no blueprint, no timetable. But the inner logic of Egypt's situation is driving him in the direction of war—an attack on Israel, or an attempt to take over the oilwells of Arabia, or both. These eventualities may be retarded by a variety of circumstances, but it is difficult to see at present how they can be deflected altogether.

Western motives in extending economic aid to Nasser were those lying behind economic aid in general: the assumption was that Western security would best be furthered by helping other countries to maintain their independence and develop into self-supporting nations. Specifically, there was the fear that if the West did not help him, Nasser would turn to the East. In addition, it was claimed that, however hostile Nasser was to the West, anyone likely to replace him would be even worse. And lastly it was argued that the strong humanitarian impulses of American and other Western nations demanded that a desperately poor country like Egypt be helped.

Whatever validity the last argument may have, the others have none. Had Nasser not received a single dollar from the Western countries over the past ten years, he could not be more hostile in his approach to them than he is now; indeed, his attitude would probably be much friendlier. Nasser, to be sure, is not a Marxist-Leninist—nor is Sukarno—but there are many Communist regimes which are far more friendly toward the West than the UAR. The threat of *full* "Communism" is still taken somewhat too seriously in the West in this new age of polycentrism: Nasser has stated that his differences with Communism are "radical," but in what way would the policy of a Marxist-Leninist regime in Egypt differ radically from the line followed by Nasser, apart perhaps from the fact that it might be somewhat less bellicose? Nor is there any ground for fearing that the Russians would be overjoyed to step in if the West were to stop financial aid to Egypt; Russia and the Eastern bloc ought to be vitally interested in the continuation of Western aid to Egypt. Aid to Cuba is said to be costing the Russians about a million dollars a day; Egypt would need a permanent subsidy considerably larger than that, and such a commitment would be an intolerable burden on the Soviet economy. It could perhaps be justified if there were any hope that the situation might improve, but Soviet economic planners must have realized by now that Egypt is a bottomless pit and that economically there will be no returns. At the same time there are, for the near future, limits to Nasser's rapprochement with the Soviet Union, whether he gets Western financial aid or not. His main ambition is to lead the neutralist countries and he cannot therefore be totally committed. (The long-term perspectives are much less reassuring.)

From a Western point of view these observations are of purely academic interest; it is probably too late to correct the mistakes that have been made. Washington's reaction to Nasser's recent invitation to the United States to jump into the lake was to postpone deciding whether Egypt should be given another $35 million in surplus food. Someone in authority in Washington apparently thought that $35 million worth of wheat and flour would have a greater effect than many hundreds of millions had in the past. This is, of course, a ridiculous idea, but the situation being what it is, it does not really matter one way or another. Nasser realizes that his orthodox methods of getting assistance (playing off West against East) are producing diminishing returns at a moment when increasing demands are being made on him. In other words, time is running out, and political and military means may soon be needed to solve Egypt's crisis. In March Nasser said in Assiut that he would enter Israel not on a red carpet but on a path of blood. The distance between words and deeds is greater in Egypt, probably, than in any other country. Perhaps it is only a manner of speaking, perhaps it is more than that. One does not envy the Israeli leaders who have to decide to what extent these threats have to be taken seriously—and who have to act accordingly.

## VI

Nasser, Ulbricht, arms to Israel—there was enough explosive material here for any number of crises. Yet at the same time, by coincidence, the issue of the statute of limitations came up for decision, and the West German government exposed itself to further criticism by its inability to take a clear line for many months on the question of Nazi criminals. On March 10 a very long debate was held in the Bundestag on whether the May 8 deadline for the prosecution of Nazi crimes was to stand. A considerable majority voted to extend the deadline; the subsequent decision to extend the deadline to the end of 1969 was a compromise solution between the proponents of a ten years' extension and those who opposed any extension. Only two or three months before, the emergence of such a majority had seemed very unlikely indeed. What caused this shift in parliamentary opinion?

In some countries murder remains punishable however long the interval between the crime and the legal proceedings, but paragraph 67 of the German criminal code of 1871 provides for a

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statute of limitations which (in the case of murder) comes automatically into force after twenty years. The time limit is suspended only if during those twenty years proceedings have been opened. (It is not, therefore, correct, as some have argued, that Hitler and Bormann could have settled in peace in the *Bundesrepublik* if they had turned up in Germany after May 10. Nor is it true that the proceedings already opened against some 13,000 people would have been cancelled if the deadline had not been extended.)

So far there was general agreement, but from this point on there was a dreadful muddle. Long, learned, and inconclusive disputes were conducted between legal experts who failed to realize that this was a political, not a legal issue. Since there is no provision in the law books for the crimes committed under the Nazi regime, Nazis are prosecuted not for "war crimes" but for murder under the ordinary criminal code of 1871. A number of people in Germany, and more abroad, outraged by the idea that mass murderers should be allowed to go free, demanded that the statute of limitations be waived. Some—like the Christian Democrat, Dr. Benda, supported by about fifty members of his party—pressed for an extension from twenty to thirty years. Others contended that the twenty-year limit could not and should not be changed; they suggested, however, 1955 rather than 1945 as the starting point, since Germany did not have full jurisdiction immediately after the end of the War. This would have given another ten years to bring the criminals to justice.

The opponents of an extension argued that it would violate the German basic law (*nulla poene sine lege*—no punishment without law) and would in general conflict with the whole idea of constitutional government. True, parliament could modify the statute of limitations or perhaps even annul it, but it could not do so retroactively. In the view of many opponents of extension, nothing was more important than to restore respect for the law in a country where law was so flagrantly violated for so many years; it was essential to adhere to the letter of the law, even if a few criminals who had hitherto evaded detection might escape. Such arguments may be rejected as "legalistic deformations," but it would be unjust to deny the *bona fides* of at least some of the proponents of this school of thought.

MANY of those who opposed extension, however, were influenced by political calculation. The leaders of the Free Democrats, for instance, knew from various public-opinion polls that about 70 per cent of the population think there should be no more Auschwitz trials, and they intimated that their party would leave the government coalition if the statute of limitations were amended. (In the end they stayed in the coalition, but the Minister of Justice, a member of their party, resigned.) By thus championing what seemed to them a popular cause, they expected to improve their not very brilliant chances in the general elections later this year. This, of course, is not what they said in public. Their position was that only a very few criminals remain undetected, that they are by now old and wretched men who may have sincerely repented, and that it would be inhuman to pursue them to the end of their days.

This argument is demonstrably false. About 12,000 Nazi criminals have been brought to trial during the last fifteen years, but most of them were small fry, and some of the very biggest fish have not yet been netted. These include entire institutions, such as the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* where Eichmann worked and of which the Gestapo was one part. Most of the "desk murderers" *(Schreibtischmoerder)* who ordered and supervised the execution of many thousands have not been touched so far, in marked contrast to the small-town toughs who have been prosecuted with commendable zeal. Nor is it true that most of the criminals are now tottering and senile old men. One of the chief defendants in a recent SS mass murder trial was a man of forty-three, and many others are in their fifties.

There are considerable technical difficulties in bringing Nazi criminals to justice. For about a decade after 1945, German courts were forbidden to try German citizens for crimes committed against non-Germans. This was a necessary precaution taken by the Allies in the first postwar years. But as a result, the investigation of those who had engineered the final solution in Eastern Europe got under way only in the late 50's. Outsiders usually underrate the amount of material that has to be checked; the mountains of files produced in a modern bureaucracy are truly staggering. Seven million pages of Nazi documents have been published on microfilm by the Washington National Archives alone. Tens of thousands of other documents are deposited in Potsdam and Merseburg (East Germany), in Warsaw, Prague, and Moscow. It goes without saying that the East European governments have not been very helpful. Their main concern is to discredit West Germany rather than to help find and punish the criminals. They are collecting ammunition, keeping their juiciest bits for release at some future date. Ludwigsburg, the West German coordinating center for the investigation of Nazi crimes, has done important work, even though its very efficient director was recently found to have been at least a nominal member of the Nazi party. Yet once the bureaucratic mills of German judicial investigation begin to grind, they grind exceedingly small, and even internal sabotage cannot stop the wheels.

There are further complications. According to the treaty of May 1955 (the *Ueberleitungsvertrag*) drafted by the Allies, German courts must not prosecute anyone already tried or investigated by the Allies. Since then, much additional evidence has come to light, but the treaty makes it impossible to touch some of the chief criminals. These

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days, when SS lieutenants or captains are sentenced, their far more guilty superior officers are sometimes among the spectators in court, and they cannot be brought to trial.

There are other obstacles as well. Sometimes there is a suspicion that some high police officials are dragging their feet when called upon to investigate their former colleagues of the Nazi political police. Nor has there been a radical purge among the judges, which makes the judiciary an instrument of doubtful value in the cleansing process that still remains to be done. Hardly a month passes without some sensational revelation about the past of a prominent judge or state prosecutor. Apart from that, more than twenty years after the event, it is not always easy to pin down individual responsibility, except where the most prominent killers are concerned. Memories fade and witnesses tend to contradict themselves and each other when trying to reconstruct what happened in the camps and ghettos during the war. In these circumstances, a clever defense lawyer can easily raise doubts and confusion and get his client acquitted.

Most opponents of the Nazi murder trials in Germany are not, however, motivated by considerations of legal rectitude, nor even of political opportunism. They simply do not want to be reminded of the horrible crime committed by Germans and in the name of the German people. These include a substantial number of young Germans who reject responsibility for the crimes of their parents' generation. The same students who are so passionately interested in the condition of the Negroes in Alabama or Mississippi do not want to be bothered with the fate of the Jews—they have heard enough about it. And they want to know why no one talks of punishing non-Germans who committed atrocities during the war.

Misinterpreting public opinion abroad, many Germans believe that in continuing these trials, they are fouling their own nest and making a bad impression, stirring up anti-German feelings abroad. They fail to understand that the attitude of most non-Germans toward the Nazi crimes has not mellowed over the years. They do not realize that their reluctance to face their own past isolates them from other Western countries. German public opinion outside Bonn is no more influenced by newspaper reports of sentiment in other countries than American or British public opinion. But politicians and parliamentarians are more sensitive, and the violent reactions abroad compelled them to re-examine their stand on the whole issue of Nazi crimes and trials. This is not to say that it was foreign pressure alone which made them change their minds; the real state of affairs was more complicated. But it is very doubtful that many of them would have been induced to rethink their position if not for foreign pressure.

Most observers of the postwar German scene will agree that the new Germany is in most essential respects a far different country from the Third Reich. The impending neo-Nazi revivals announced every now and then during the late 40's and 50's never took place. To equate Hitler's and Erhard's Germany may provide emotional release, but such an equation has no relation to the facts. Yet it is also true that most observers still have to be convinced of the depth and thoroughness of Germany's democratic transformation. Would the country's democratic institutions be able, for instance, to survive an economic crisis? In the eyes of a large part of the world, Germany is still on probation. For Germans, this is exceedingly difficult to accept. If all Germans are treated like so many criminals out on parole, if no confidence is shown in them, they are hardly likely to respond by opting for brotherhood and democracy—even convicted criminals are shown some trust in the hope that they will mend their ways: thus *Die Zeit* in a recent editorial. Should not the Germans, especially the younger generation, be given a little more credit? Credit should indeed be given where credit is due. But distrust and suspicion will persist so long as the majority of Germans show such reluctance to face up to the recent past. The German government and parliament have shown that they do not want to shirk their responsibilities. But there is still the disquieting fact that their decision (as a British correspondent put it) was so "sadly out of touch" with public opinion, even though it was a compromise resolution which did not really go far enough.

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*DAVID T. BAZELON*

# BIG BUSINESS & THE DEMOCRATS

HARDLY ever before has so much political history been crowded into so short a period as was jammed into the "fiscal" political year extending from November 22, 1963 to November 3, 1964. The urgent need, in coming to terms with an overflowing period of this kind, is for perspective. Let me then suggest the following hypothesis: the political events of 1964 make possible, and all but insure, the belated completion of the New Deal. To fill out this hypothesis, we must be clear about what the New Deal was, and wherein its lack of completion lay.

In most respects, the New Deal, given the facts of our history, was a profound triumph—equal in stature to the Colonial Revolution and the Northern victory in the Civil War. But it did not solve the problem of the Great Depression: its only broad attempt to do so was the NRA, mere fragments of which survived; and the problem was actually "solved," of course, only by war production. What the New Deal, all on its own, did was to interrupt a cataclysmic deflation. And at the behest of an overwhelming majority of the electorate, it bequeathed to the federal government the responsibility to forestall any uncontrolled deflation in the future.

The completion of the New Deal revolution, which had been delayed for a quarter of a century, required political moves and policy moves which none of the Democratic leaders who expressed the willingness to make showed the capacity to carry through successfully. The major policy move that had to be made was to institutionalize budget deficits in pursuit of full production and employment. The essential political moves that had to be made were the subordination of the Southern minority—in order to "contain" the potentially explosive racial issue—and the inclusion of a significant element of corporate power in the New Deal coalition—in order to engineer the acquiescence of business and finance in efforts toward full production, and to insure the distribution of a sufficient share of the benefits thereof to all the constituent elements of the coalition. The New Deal grouping, great creation that it was, did not have the power—lacking the imminence of economic collapse and without a disciplined congressional majority—to issue orders to the "second government" of big business. Caught between the corporations and the South, the New Deal was stopped short of fulfillment. And with the rise of the military economy, "fulfillment" often enough seemed like a wayward impulse to gild the lily: both taxes and deficits for military purposes were nicely accepted; nor was there any lack of "cooperation" on the part of big business in achieving full production by the military route. So the New Deal was not only caught in the crossfire between business and the South; it was outflanked by the military-industrial complex.

All this has been changed (or at any rate a firm basis for the change provided) by the events of the year just ended. The liberal congressional sweep, the Civil Rights Act, the actual and potential increase in Negro voting, and the defection of the racists to Goldwater, now invite a renegotiation of the role of the Southern bloc within the Democratic coalition. And the tax cut, followed by the five-billion-dollar welfare deficit in the new budget—with assurances of further revenue cuts and deficits later in the year, if the pace of the economy slows—have pretty clearly established, even if only minimally, the long-awaited full-production deficit policy.

But the greatest political event of 1964—if one understands what the New Deal was and what it intended—has been the inclusion of a glittering section of the national corporate community within the Democratic party. Some people think that this will turn out to be a transitory development occasioned solely by the monumental error of the Republicans in nominating Goldwater. I suggest, on the contrary, that this development was lucky but is not in the least transitory, and that we must now begin to believe in the reality of 1964. But if we are to appreciate the meaning of that reality in all its fullness, we must look as far back as 1912, when the previously governing coalition broke up and the pieces began to

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arrange themselves in the pattern which eventually became the New Deal.

## II

When the Republican party was founded, Major Alvan E. Bovay chose the word "Republican" because, as he said, "It is the only one that will serve all purposes present and future. . . ." With this end in view, the party had a magnificent beginning: the coalition which elected Lincoln with 40 per cent of the vote was probably the wildest mixture in our history, ranging all the way from elements of the Know-Nothing party to radical intellectual New Englanders. And whether or not it served all purposes, the party served sufficient interests to hold power until 1912, with the slight interruptions of two Cleveland administrations. (Cleveland probably succeeded because he was a Me-too Democrat who cut the price on the same services the Republicans had been rendering to business since Grant.)

By 1912, however, it was all over: the party of Mark Hanna, which had tied itself too tightly to irresponsible big money, dissipated the powerful national coalition it had inherited and created, and the Democrats once again had the opportunity forced on them to take up the burden of American history, as they had done before in the other worlds of Jefferson and Jackson.

Following the defeat of Bryan in 1896 (as James MacGregor Burns has noted), there was a steady decline in the exercise of the franchise which reached its lowest point in 1924. Perhaps this decline should be seen as the dissolution of Republican power, providing the opportunity for the growth of national Democratic power, which culminated, of course, in Roosevelt's triumph in 1932. But the process was in motion before that. Samuel Lubell has pointed out that the Republican hold on the cities was dissolved by Al Smith, not by FDR. The Republican plurality in the twelve largest cities shrank from 1,638,000 in 1920 to 1,252,000 in 1924, and in 1928 the Democrats achieved a plurality of 38,000. Thus, from having been the party of the South and the West, the Democrats were now becoming the party of the North. Hoover's insane devotion to the myth of individualism and the principles of federal non-rule speeded his party's final debacle: the Republicans lost the Negroes and the workers forever, and, along with them, the sincere and well-to-do Progressives. (FDR set out with the determination to catch his cousin's former supporters—the enlightened minority of the middle and upper classes, the idealistic Bull Moosers: Harold Ickes is an obvious example, but not the only one.)

The consequence of the Republican default and the locking of the Progressive middle class into the Democratic party (there to squirm in the embrace of the South) has been a half-century of floundering. For in the absence of a genuinely revolutionary re-ordering of social power, there could be no adequate national government in the United States *without* a large portion of national corporate power or *with* too much of the South.

Those Progressives who remained with the Republican party, with its embarrassing ties to the troglodytes and with its pallid Me-tooism, achieved even less than the ones who went over to the Democrats. In explaining the source of Me-tooism, Walter Lippmann has written:

> For when the [Republican] party split in 1912, it surrendered to the Democrats the initiative in the selection and formulation of issues in domestic and international affairs. By surrendering the initiative, the party organization surrendered the vital center of American politics to the Democrats.

Eisenhower was the Republicans' last chance to make up for the 1912 mistake and subsequent defaults—their last chance, that is, to retake the "vital center," where the only ready possibility lies of putting together a national majority coalition. That he failed scarcely needs to be demonstrated. How anyone can imagine that anyone else is apt to have anything like as good an opportunity in the foreseeable future, is quite beyond me. The Republicans needed a winner, which they got in Eisenhower; but they needed a master politician rather more, and this they did not get. And even if Goldwaterism within the party is decisively squelched (a very unlikely outcome), that it could ever have taken over at all remains an enduring curse for a party aspiring to the center.

The Kennedy interregnum ended with the accession of a true centrist to power. Whether Johnson can build a genuine and comprehensive center party depends entirely on whether he can hold the corporate power he has brought into the New Deal coalition. For without it, to repeat, there can be no effective national government. To this difficult and crucial matter, therefore, we must now turn.

## III

On July 23, 1964 (after the Civil Rights Act had been passed, and Goldwater had been nominated), President Johnson hosted a luncheon attended by 242 business leaders, the ostensible purpose of which had to do with civil rights—the corporate barons were to be asked to use their influence "to persuade others that the law of the land must be obeyed." It was the first such well-attended Presidential luncheon, and the physical planning was unavoidably off-form. The National Airport across the river in Virginia was not able to handle the crush of "more than 90 company planes"; two JetStars and "a dozen humbler" aircraft were diverted to Dulles Airport. The Washington *Post* also reported: "An opera-

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tions worker . . . remarked that 'every big corporation you can think of' was represented."

Thus, the barons met—with a President who was Democratic. So be it, for the eccentric and *de facto* character of the new Magna Charta.

WHATEVER fresh and compelling attractions a revived Republican party may be able to offer big business in 1968 or later, the underlying point is that a startlingly significant vanguard of the corporate barons has begun to move toward Washington—and toward the Democrats, at least for the time being—not to obstruct the social development of the country but to participate in it. A part of the basic thinking behind this new move was indicated by Lammot du Pont Copeland, president of the big chemical company, in a speech to the New York Chamber of Commerce on February 10, 1964:

> Whether we like it or not, the Federal Government is a partner in every business in the country. . . . We are confronted . . . with a condition and not a theory. . . . As businessmen we need the understanding and cooperation of government in our effort to throw the economic machine into high gear.

A few months later, on July 2, 1964, the president and second leading officer of the Bank of America returned from a trip to Europe and told reporters how impressed they were with the extent of cooperation there between business and government. "They are doing what we are talking about," the president said. The very important news here is that "we" are now talking about it.

There are so many excellent reasons for this shift that it is much easier to explain its happening than it would have been to account for its not having happened. What keeps us from readily recognizing this is the ordinary image of "business" as a monolith, and moreover one with an eternal and unreasoning allegiance to the Republican party. But business is not a monolith, and the degree of national irresponsibility involved in its traditional attitudes is no longer appropriate to the large national corporations. What I am suggesting, in other words, is that the "natural" division in the business community between small and large, and between old money and new, has now matured—with profound political consequences.

After the Goldwater nomination, the *Wall Street Journal* reported: "A big majority of executives clearly favor the Arizona conservative." But the *Journal* also cited a Research Institute of America survey of 8,000 businessmen to the effect that one out of three would vote for Johnson, whereas four years earlier Kennedy had been supported by only one out of five. Which one out of which three, the *Journal* did not say. Eileen Shanahan, assigned for several months by the New York *Times* to cover the story of business defection during the campaign, wrote directly to this point in her report on the Northeast and Midwest:

> The business executives who expect to cast the first Democratic Presidential vote of their lives are nearly all affiliated with large companies.

She noted "the general rule that small businessmen are remaining Republican." Additional differences, generally borne out by later reports from other regions, were that Johnson was getting more support in the East, in big cities, among middle-aged rather than younger or older men, and from "businessmen who have previously been involved . . . in public affairs." In her report from the South, she quoted a large-firm executive from Winston-Salem: "Businessmen in the South felt a sense of relief when Johnson came in. We knew him . . . we knew from the start that he was not anti-business." There was, however, a "less pronounced" shift in the Far West, while the defection was greater in port cities like San Francisco, New Orleans, and Boston, and among businessmen involved in international trade.

Defense contractors, of course, favor government spending and tend to go along with the party in power. The effort of the Goldwater forces to identify *all* of Johnson's business support as being of this character was, however, patent nonsense. In fact, even many engineers (members of a profession that has always been distinguished by its overwhelming Republicanism) were organized in 1964 by the scientific elite into an action group called Scientists and Engineers for Johnson and Humphrey. The Organizing Group of forty-seven scientists was exceptionally distinguished—it included George Kistiakowsky, Jerome Wiesner, Detlev W. Bronk, James M. Gavin, Benjamin M. Spock, Gerard Piel, Harold C. Urey, Paul Dudley White, Warren Weaver, and other leading professors and administrators, as well as scientific corporate officers of IBM, CBS, Hallicrafters, Gillette, Northrop, Hughes Aircraft, Lockheed, Aerojet-General, Litton Industries, North American Aviation, The Martin Company, and RCA.

The most important of the really important business leaders to come out for Johnson, however, was Henry Ford II. He announced for the President early and he later became one of the forty-five sponsors of the National Independent Committee for President Johnson and Senator Humphrey—the elite, and willing-to-be-counted big business group behind the President. Mr. Ford is important not alone for being Mr. Ford, but also for having headed the Business and Finance Committee for the Reduction in 1963, which lobbied among the corporate barons for support of the tax-cut. This group was organized in April 1963—seven months before the assassination, fifteen months before the Goldwater nomination; by May it had announced a membership in excess of four hundred. In this early

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organizing effort, Mr. Ford was joined by the president of Westinghouse, and by Stuart T. Saunders, then president of the Norfolk and Western Railway and now chairman of the board of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Addressing the Business Council (probably the single most august organization of barons in the nation) on October 17, 1964, Mr. Saunders proclaimed the tax cut to have been an unqualified success—he noted an increase of after-tax corporate profits of 18 per cent over the previous year. The *Times* reported that Mr. Saunders "emphasized, in a news conference following his speech, that he did not want his remarks taken politically" (this—two weeks before the election!)*

Henry H. Fowler, a Washington lawyer appointed by Kennedy as Under Secretary of the Treasury, was the administration liaison in setting up the Committee for the Reduction; he was also one of the organizers of the campaign committee in 1964 (after leaving the government). Mr. Fowler, a Democrat, is reputed to have been the central "executive" figure in the corporate-Democratic rapprochement. (He was recently appointed Secretary of the Treasury by Johnson.) The leading Republican figure seems to have been Robert B. Anderson, Eisenhower's Secretary of the Treasury and Johnson's fellow-Texan. Among other things, Mr. Anderson is a partner in the Wall Street firm of Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades—as is John L. Loeb, another organizer of the National Independent Committee. The other three organizers were Sidney J. Weinberg of Goldman, Sachs; Carter L. Burgess, chairman of the board of American Machinery & Foundry; and John T. Connor of Merck & Co. (since appointed Secretary of Commerce).

A list of the forty-five "sponsors" of the political committee was published in the New York *Times* on September 4, 1964, following an organizational meeting at the White House. Perhaps the most impressive grouping in the list was the investment bankers (concentrated in New York and Boston) including, besides those already mentioned, Thomas S. Lamont, Lehman Bros., Lazard Frères & Co., Eugene R. Black, Lewis W. Douglas and Marriner S. Eccles (from New Deal days), and some Boston Cabots. Other well-known names (of individuals or companies represented by a leading executive) were: Kaiser, Curtiss-Wright, Inland Steel, American Electric Power, Burroughs, Ralph Lazarus of Federated Department Stores (current owner of Goldwater's department store), Hunt Foods, American Can, Tennessee Gas Transmission, Western Pacific Railroad, and Texaco.

Not exactly the *Fortune* list of the five hundred leading corporations, to be sure. But it was a list of *public* sponsors—and traditionally, businessmen contribute privately. (Eileen Shanahan reported that "almost none" of the new Democratic supporters "will permit use of his name.") Moreover, there is the fact—noted proudly in the White House release—that three-quarters of these Johnson supporters had always been Republicans.

WITHIN a month, Citizens for Goldwater-Miller responded in kind with a full-page ad in the *Wall Street Journal* (October 1, 1964), listing 519 businessmen who were backing Goldwater. This was also not the *Fortune* list, although it included some national corporations—Armstrong Cork, J. I. Case, Cluett Peabody, Eli Lilly, Quaker Oats, and others. Upon closer analysis, the hidden surprise in this list is that the Goldwater supporters were heavily concentrated in Illinois, California, and Ohio. (There was also an intriguing concentration among steel and steel-related businesses.†) Along with Texas, with its well-known concentration of right-wing wealth, *these were the four big states the Goldwater strategists said they had to win in order to put their man over.* The persuasive implication here is that the Goldwater maneuver from the beginning involved a schism in the business community—more specifically, a power-play by regional interests to shift the *business* balance of power, using the Republican party as the vehicle. Or was it a response to a power shift begun in the East?

Probably both. In the East—and for the more national corporate interests—the basic policy toward the government was undergoing a change; elsewhere, the considerable growth of regional business wealth was producing a natural assertion of new independence and power. For representative individuals, think of Douglas Dillon and George Humphrey—each a leading spokesman on the basic divisive issue of a purposeful federal deficit. (Miss Shanahan said: "It is on the issue of Government deficits that the division of opinion between small and large businessmen emerges most dramatically.") On this issue, under George Humphrey's tutelage (along with the pull of his own primitivism) Eisenhower failed—*failed as a centrist.* And the tragi-comedy of Richard Nixon, of course, is that he made himself into a centrist of the Republican party, not the American nation: a serious oversight for a shrewd politician. It remained for Kennedy to plough the ground, and Johnson to harvest the seed-grain, of the new American center. Each in his own way (which turned out to be marvelously complementary) understood the New Deal heritage and its imperatives, and the consequent vulnerability of the Republican posture.

Business, then, is not a monolith. The classic

*Further on the Business Council: M. J. Rossant, writing in the *Times* for August 17, 1964, cited a member as saying that 60 per cent of the group would support President Johnson—a fact which, if true, indicates an avalanche rather than a drift.

†I am indebted for these notions to a former student of mine, Elinor Graham.

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view, which produced the image of the business monolith, is simply the distinction between property-owners and the propertyless; the distinction to replace this classic one concerns personal proprietorship and sparsely populated areas as against highly organized property tenure and use in densely populated centers. With the natural caveat that young people are not very realistic, and old men hate to change their views, this formulation can be useful in evaluating diverse business opinion.

## IV

In years to come, it will be recognized that 1958 is a pregnant date like 1929 and 1896 and 1912 and 1964. What happened in 1958 was that the postwar inflationary boom came to an end—by something like "administrative decision." In 1958, the powers that could have done so in 1928, made the decision they should have made then, and they made it in the light of the political decision the American people had meanwhile made in 1933: that is, the *repeal* of natural deflation. Since there was so much more to be destroyed in 1958, and since big money and big business had been through it once before, they agreed to slow down the inflationary boom that had been presided over by the congressional Republicans and then the Eisenhower administration. Indicating the administered quality of this decision is the fact that the corporate powers initiated an expensive advertising campaign around the slogan—*"Inflation is the cruellest tax of all."* What led them to this departure was the built-in (by the New Deal) and unintended (by Eisenhower) deficit of $18 billion in the first six months of fiscal 1959 which, after much effort, was cut down to a $12 billion deficit for the full year. This was a unique financial event in American history. It meant that big business and big money were finally accepting the facts of life, including the fact of the New Deal (which in this particular context means cooperation between government and industry to prevent the busts that must, if things are left alone, follow the booms). For American society, it was like being born again.

When U.S. Steel, reportedly squeezed by its own inefficiency, attempted to get a spiral going again after a few years, President Kennedy reacted as if the non-boom policy were not an act of unilateral discretion on the part of the barons, but was a kind of *joint* program of business and government. The emotional reaction to this presumption was, of course, extreme, but the policy was not abandoned (for all that U.S. Steel got itself a piece of a price rise a year later). And the policy still is in effect, as are the administration's wage/price "guidelines." These are a highly amateur effort at price control, or reasonableness, which can be "enforced" only by voluntary cooperation on the part of business. The point is that this cooperation has been given.

Why? To answer that question, we must first grasp that there are two kinds of inflation. The ordinary one concerns prices; the overlooked one concerns paper (stocks, bonds, private and public debt). In the postwar period, paper inflation has far outdistanced price inflation, although the latter has been by far the more notorious.

Prices have, roughly, trebled since the bottom of the Depression and doubled since the war. Total public and private debt, however, went from $200 billion in 1935 to something under $1200 billion in 1962—at least twice as great an advance as the increase in prices. Meanwhile, the market value of stocks listed on the New York Stock Exchange went from about $46 billion in 1940 to $76 billion in 1950, $170 billion in 1955, $219 in 1957, $196 in 1958 (notice the decline), up again to $277 in 1959, and to $346 in 1963. In other words, while prices were doubling since the war, values on the New York Stock Exchange went up seven times over; total private debt went up five times over; state and local debt better than quadrupled; and federal public debt went up only about 20 per cent—including deficits attributable to all cold war expenditures.

All this means that the increase in corporate profits and in the value of corporate stocks have been tied only loosely to increased prices in the postwar period; and since 1958 in particular, corporate values have continued to go up even though prices have remained fairly steady. There was no reason, then, for the corporations to object to holding the line on prices, especially since: (1) prices rise by standing still if (as was indeed the case in the period under consideration) costs go down and sales increase; (2) financial decisions concerning inventory and expansion and so on can become more sophisticated and less expensive if there are no recessions to discount; and (3) the government's anti-recession policy was heavily slanted in favor of direct and immediate advantages for business.

Last year, in the middle of May, Dr. Donner of General Motors pointed out that the company had not raised its basic auto prices since 1958. Then he pledged that "we're going to do our part" to hold the line on prices. A few months later, in January of this year, General Motors announced the greatest annual profits of any single corporation in the history of the human race. Now what could possibly induce GM to yearn for Goldwater purism under such circumstances? It is only the liberal intellectual's traditional and excessive downgrading of business intelligence that even raises the issue.

Following the decision to forego a runaway boom, the big corporations were willing to settle for high-level stagnation—about 80 per cent of capacity—and preserve the achieved level of paper values and the growth that could reasonably be

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expected therefrom. Then, when the recession began in 1960, some enlightened elements began to see that the choice lay between an uncertain course of continued high-level stagnation, and embarking on a series of planned deficits. The Democrats, under Kennedy and Dillon, demonstrated that there was no good reason whatever to settle for stagnation and frequent recessions. With covert and then overt deficits, they gave business and most of the rest of the country almost five years of good growth and no recession. This "New Economic Policy," which was sold as a tardy imitation of proven centrist procedure in Europe, has worked extremely well, bringing about the longest postwar period without recessions.

That it is genuinely entitled to be called a New Economic Policy seems clear. Under the thinnest veneer of a reform bill, a $10-billion-plus tax cut was advertised and finally enacted (more recent indications put it at $14 billion). Thus was taken the first step toward a purposeful non-military deficit. This was then buttressed by another advertising program which encompassed the embarrassingly small ($1 billion) "war on poverty." Meanwhile, a great deal of conversation and newspaper speculation about defense cut-backs occurred. And there were rumors about further tax cuts. All this was designed to induce spending wherever possible in the private sector, and to prepare the necessary groundwork for *non-military public spending*, should the political occasion arise. (Thus the post-Cuban *détente* with the Russians might be deepened without economic disaster.)

But the substance of all this indirection should not be lost sight of: consistent administrative deficits were incurred—$3.9 billion in 1961, $6.4 in 1962, $6.3 in 1963, $8.2 in 1964, and $6.3 estimated for 1965. If by one means or another—indeed, if by any means—a ten- to twenty-billion-dollar annual non-military deficit is institutionalized, we will have finally passed a major post-New Deal point of departure, and later historians will treasure the indirection as consummate shrewdness.

This policy has corralled enlightened, national business for the Democrats. It was Kennedy's creation—and Johnson executed it. Business opposed Kennedy no matter how hard he tried to please them, and he tried very hard (the story is well detailed in the recent book by Hobart Rowen, *The Free Enterprisers: Kennedy, Johnson and the Business Establishment*). But business accepted Johnson—*and* the policy, when offered by him—almost immediately. This is where Kennedy's "style," especially including that of the intellectuals around him, was quite important: businessmen detest intellectuals.

In long-term perspective, Harry Truman understood (and tried to fulfill) the New Deal as the near-triumph of Populism. John Kennedy saw it as the near-victory of enlightened managerialism. But President Johnson sees it more shrewdly as the great national political coalition that, in its essence, it truly is. A more elegant style must wait on the future.

## V

If the NEP continues to work, the corporate barons will have to remain in politics in a new way and more seriously than before. The consequence is that they will be unable to ignore the governing and majority party—i.e., the Democrats, who have the more modern, more usable coalition. But not only is it more modern and usable; it is already there—and when a big corporation enters a new field, it always begins by buying into a good going concern.

Thus Lyndon Johnson, Me-tooing Eisenhower politically and accepting the direction of Kennedy's shrewdly constructed economic policy, has now put together the elements of a competent Establishment. A significant sector (still a minority) of national corporate power has now joined in responsible national government, accepting the Democratic party as the vehicle. For liberals who have never faced the overriding facts of corporate power, and whose politics is derived from a glowingly fuzzy remembrance of New Deal things past, the event—when they own up to it—will be spiritually disquieting in the extreme. For their more realistic companions, who recognize the New Deal to have been a major innovative effort to save the corporations from themselves, the event will be taken with a deep sigh of relief—and as an occasion for some fresh political thinking. The simplest and most important facts of our political life are and have been for some time: (1) that there can be no adequate government of the United States without the participation and cooperation of the major corporations—they are in fact all by themselves the major part of "*the* government of the United States"; and (2) that there has not yet been created in this country a power equal to the task of issuing *orders* to the corporations. Therefore, it has been and remains necessary to negotiate their compliance with federal policy.

What died in 1964 was 1940 Me-tooism. The Republican party cannot avoid survival of some kind; the important question is whether the Me-too group (otherwise known as the moderates) can devise and execute a *new* Me-tooism. The old one is properly dead. Since it was a calculatedly pale reflection of Democratic initiative, the new form of the latter must emerge clearly before it can be newly recalculated. Barring the intervention of genius, this is at least four-to-eight years off.

Meanwhile, the Republican party is, from the most generous point of view, riven. The Goldwater group, broadly conceived, severely limits the flexibility required to create the new and

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necessary Me-tooism. This group does not appear to be impressed with its defeat, apart from a disappointment with Goldwater himself. They can hardly be thrown out, and it is difficult to believe that they will quietly return to their previous captive status in the party. Moreover, the "success" of John Grenier's Southern strategy is a new, intractable factor that will plague the moderates. It took an economic earthquake and a lot of history to bring the majority of the Negroes into the Democratic party while it included the Southern racists. Now the racists are oozing away from the Democrats to the Republicans at just the moment when the national racist policy of the Goldwater campaign has produced a massive defection of Negroes from the Republican party. How can the moderates get them back, especially now that the administration has put real force behind Negro registration in the South? And how can the moderates win in the cities without the Negroes? Paradoxically, urban Republicans may have to become, like Javits and Lindsay, *more* liberal than the ordinary run of Democrat in order to win in the North.

The utter collapse of the moderate or Me-too wing of the Republican party became widely known after the California primary in the spring of 1964, and the subsequent cancellation of Rockefeller's self-financed campaign. At that point, even amateurs and outsiders could see that the money for stopping Goldwater had not arrived. Eastern and national corporate money abandoned the Republican party because the Goldwater group raised the ante: there is today too much primitive money, West and local, for the corporations to try to match. To buy into the Democratic coalition costs less; also, you win.

## VI

The President now has at least two secure years in which to consolidate and further prove-out his creation. My guess is that he will succeed. By backing Negro voting rights in the South, he has already forced the racists deeper into the Republican party. What remains is for him to clear the decks of hangover New Deal legislation and to use federal money to back up the working congressional majority he is so eminently able—by training, talent, and unprecedented opportunity—to weld together. He may even reach out imaginatively to a Northern and urban Democratic-Republican coalition in Congress to replace the deeply damaged Southern Democratic-Republican coalition. This would certainly be a proper accompaniment to the new Establishment government. And it would follow naturally enough as a reasonable deal on behalf of the President's new business allies and as generally realistic politics, if the Northeastern Republican party (with urban allies elsewhere, as in Michigan) remains in business but does not re-achieve its dominance of the national party. This seems to me a likely event: the barons of the National Independent Committee agreed as an organizing principle to support *only* Johnson and Humphrey, leaving themselves free to continue with their usual localistic interests. In some instances, this might not even be so bad from the President's point of view, since it would give him a fairly good handle in local party affairs (and even more of a handle in Congress).

Another important point: if enough big businessmen (a majority is not necessary) enter into the politics of the Democratic party at the Presidential level—and abandon their backing of the fanatical free enterprisers in and out of Congress—they could easily build a congressional majority behind "their" President. One million dollars a year—chewing-gum money—puts $20,000 into each of 50 congressional campaigns; five million dollars a year—pipe-tobacco money—puts $25,000 into enough campaigns to elect a majority of the House; etc. Thus, the Establishment could create an *ad hoc* parliamentary system as backing for whatever it happened to be establishing that year.

The political possibilities are numerous and interesting; the eventualities will depend, however, on the success of the new centrist *policy* behind which the New Deal-Establishment coalition—with whatever additions, subtractions, and rearrangements—is forming. And it is so forming only because the policy works so well; therefore, no longer than that. Runaway technological unemployment, renewed price inflation, or inadequate deficits could undermine the NEP.* But in this wealthy country only superhuman and super-shortsighted greed could engender the kind of anti-historical stupidity that might make such matters unmanageable. Clearly the next step, after institutionalizing the deficit through the 1966 election, is indicative planning—that is, voluntary planning executed by the government with the cooperation of the big corporations. Then very likely, later, wayward *individual* producers will have to be forced to stay within the wage/price guidelines (general price control is out of the question).

Meanwhile, everyone becomes more and more committed to the continuance of the incredibly continuing prosperity. These commitments are substantial, and need have nothing to do with ideology: it will be the *present,* not the *future,* that is being "proven." Business, even in the South, cannot countenance actions which interfere with good business (including sales to Negroes). Therefore, one may expect nonmilitant and unexciting compliance with the Civil Rights Act and what we may call "calcu-

* As throughout, I am foregoing discussion of the possible effects of foreign/military matters.

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lated utilization" of the anti-poverty program. In addition, since an educated work force becomes increasingly important to industry, one must be a psychoanalyst to imagine determinative reasons for business's refusing to allow the government to bear more and more of the cost of educating our substantially under-educated population. Moreover, now that big business, in dealing with the unions, has had enough experience with fringe-benefits, it may even allow the government to assist it in covering the health and retirement costs of the working population. And finally, why should business not wish the government to underwrite purchasing power to protect the achieved level of capital values, especially including that involved with consumer debt?

If the President can divide Eastern and bigger business from smaller and Western, older from newer money, managerial from fee-simple types, and include those he gathers in the Democratic party while holding most—but not all—of the current Democratic coalition, he will have at last re-created a national Establishment party which could and probably would govern this mass technological society.

And the "captured liberals" in the Democratic party—where will all this leave them? The enactment of the hang-over New Deal program will leave them bereft—specifically, of a program. There are, however, four considerations, or issues, or sources of issues, to replace it: (1) Johnson's policy may prove to be too little and too late, or not flexible enough to arrest urban decay and contain technology; (2) the institutionalized deficit may not be allowed to grow large enough; (3) the Establishment pie, granted a successful baking in its own oven, may not be divided properly; and (4) there may arise what we might begin calling crypto-political matters of culture—e.g., not whether there is a program in education and housing, or its dollar value, but what *kind* of education and housing it is apt to, or did, produce.

There is enough here to keep any middle-aged liberal busy who may be unhappy with the bland corporatism of the emerging Establishment party. One may add, finally, that the *new* generation has not yet had *its* politics: it is only the Depression-and-War generation that will now close out the remaining New Deal business.

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*DAN JACOBSON*

# SONIA

## *A Story*

BEHIND THE HOLIDAY resort were mountains—high, bare, and rock-littered, with much black soil showing through green grass; in front of it were the yellow beach and the sea. The resort itself was a pale, ugly sprawl of peeling stucco hotels and boarding houses. Sea sand drifted up through cracks in the pavements; little lawns and salt-stunted palm trees grew on islands in the middle of the roads. A long walk, called the promenade, was raised above the beach on concrete pillars; in the middle of the promenade was a concert hall and a collection of milk-bars, hot-dog stalls, and amusement arcades. From the resort, trains ran frequently to Cape Town, twenty miles away; other holiday places were scattered farther down the line, at a distance of two or three miles from one another, until you came to the naval base at Simonstown.

The five of us, all schoolboys on holiday, without our parents, had the run of the place. We swam in the sea, we lay for hours on the beach, we ate hot-dogs at odd times of day, we tried our luck in the amusement arcades, we sent Fatty Krawitz (because he was the oldest of us) into a bottle-store from which he came out with three bottles of cheap Cape wine which we planted ostentatiously on the table in our room. We took the train or hitchhiked to Cape Town, where we went to cinemas and department stores and loafed about the docks until we were driven away by uniformed officials; we explored the Cape Colored and Malay quarters of the town; we went to watch cricket at Newlands. We were easily beguiled and as easily distracted. After the small, drab mining town on the edge of the Karroo in which we all lived, everything around us was more of a novelty, more of an adventure, than we could ever bring ourselves to admit to each other. The number of people in the streets and on the beaches was a source of excitement; the sound of the sea at night would not let us rest; the persistence of the pure, thin twilight surprised us every evening, rousing obscure longings, secret melancholies, imprecise lusts.

Incessantly we looked out for girls. We schemed to get introductions to them on the beach, or just ogled and called out to them there and everywhere else, in the sea, on the promenade, in the amusement arcades. But Sonia Ritstein we ignored, though we saw her every day and though she was not so much less good-looking than many of the girls we were pleased to walk up and down with on the promenade and tried to coax into the darkness beneath it.

We ignored Sonia for no better reason than that she was the daughter of the widowed Mrs. Ritstein, who ran the boarding house we were living in and whom we scandalized by the mess we made of the attic room we all shared, the noise we made at table, the lateness of the hour at which we got up in the mornings, the bribes we offered to the colored waitresses to bring us bigger helpings. Mrs. Ritstein was a short, freckled woman with a large bosom and very little breath inside it; she conducted her business in frantic, gasping spasms of activity, when she rushed up and down the stairs, berated the servants, counted linen, waved cutlery about, complained about her guests, and repeatedly asked God why she went on and on, year after year. When these spasms were over she sat torpid on the porch ("for a breath of air") or joined the guests at cards in the lounge.

Sonia was the youngest of Mrs. Ritstein's children, and the only one still at home. She was a tall, slow-moving, rather heavily built girl; she had a long neck and large brown eyes, with sluggish eyelids above them; she wore her red-brown hair piled on top of her head in a loose coil. When people greeted her she flushed slightly, and moved her head up and to one side, as if there were some obstruction in her throat which she had to clear before she could answer. Her mouth was broad and somehow without definite outline; it simply seemed to lose itself in her freckled cheeks.

Though we spoke of her as if, being Mrs. Ritstein's daughter, she belonged automatically to the enemy camp, she took no part in the running of the establishment. Whenever one saw her she was carrying a book in her hand, usually with a finger thrust between its pages to mark her place. One would come across her reading in all kinds of odd corners—in one of the tiny linen rooms, for example, or even, between meals, in the deserted

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dining room. When she was disturbed she would look up, surprised and guilty, stretching her long neck, and would put the book down on her lap. There was something almost abject in her gaze and manner at these times, as though she wished to escape not merely from the intruder, but also from the embarrassment of being reminded of her own bulky body and inert posture. She seemed to have no friends, either among the holiday-makers or residents of the town, and when she went to change her books at the little local library, or took her towel and costume to the beach, she did so on her own. Mrs. Ritstein complained to anyone who would listen, even to us, what "a dreamer" Sonia was, how she "always had her nose in a book," how she "never lifted a finger to help." We listened to these complaints without much sympathy.

Secretly, however, I had taken notice of the titles of the books Sonia carried about, and had been impressed by them. At different times I saw her reading *The Mill on the Floss,* the short stories of Hemingway, an anthology of Elizabethan songs and sonnets, and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King.*

Poor, condemned Sonia! Before the holiday was over we were to learn what shapes her books had given to the pressures that were struggling for release and explanation within her; just a few months later she was dead.

*Haply I think on thee, and then my state,*
*Like to the lark at break of day arising*
*From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate.*

These words, neatly printed in ink on a piece of paper, lay on Fatty Krawitz's bread plate when we came in for lunch one afternoon.

Fatty Krawitz suspected that one of us was playing a practical joke on him. But we were all as puzzled as he was by the message, and looked around the dining room, wondering who had written it out. We didn't doubt, at first, that its intention was satirical. Not that there was anything wrong with Fatty Krawitz; in fact, his nickname, which dated from his childhood, did him an injustice. He was merely plump now: a tall, round-faced, round-featured youth, very neat, almost finicky, about his appearance—particularly about his hair, which was always combed precisely away from his solemn yet untroubled brow. He was waiting for his matriculation results to be telegraphed to him by his parents in Lyndhurst. If they were what he expected them to be, he intended going to the university to take a degree in commerce, before joining his father's firm of chartered accountants. He had it all worked out, in his careful way. Fatty was the oldest of us and the most responsible, the least mischievous; we usually heeded the warnings, which he uttered with an almost imperceptible stammer, when he thought we had gone far enough. He was by far the strongest swimmer of us all, I remember, and that, too, added to his prestige among us.

Fatty stared again at the paper, when he had finished staring around the room. "It's poetry," he said.

We jeered in mock admiration. "What a brain! Fatty says it's poetry! How long did it take you to work that out, Fatty?"

"It's Shakespeare," I said.

"How do you know it's Shakespeare?" Fatty demanded suspiciously. "Did you write it? You trying to be funny or something?"

"I didn't write it. I just know it's Shakespeare."

One by one we again denied responsibility for the tribute; he could see, we said, that it wasn't in the hand of any of us. So Fatty called over one of the waitresses and asked her if she had seen anyone put the piece of paper on his plate. She said no. Aggrieved, Fatty looked around the room once more. Sonia was not at her place that day; perhaps if she had been sitting there in her usual heavy, detached way, I wouldn't have thought of her. As it was, I said suddenly, "It's Sonia!"

"Are you crazy?"

"It must be. Who else in this place goes around reading poetry?"

Fatty was not convinced. When we went up to our room, after the meal, there were two more papers there, one on his bed and the other on the table. The one on the table had his name on it, so that no mistake could be made about the person for whom it was written. On the first paper the scribe asked if she should compare Fatty to a summer's day; he was more lovely and more temperate. On the second she begged him to be true to her, for the world which seemed to lie before them like a land of dreams had really neither joy nor love, nor light, nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain.

"What the hell's going on?" Fatty demanded in bewilderment, shaking the papers in the air. "What's it all about?"

But the others now agreed with me that Sonia must be responsible, and we urged Fatty to go and challenge her about it. Whether she had written the messages or not, we were sure that the result of Fatty's approach to her would be amusing.

We were wrong. Fatty allowed himself to be persuaded, and went off to confront Sonia, with the papers in his hand. He was away longer than we had anticipated. When he came back he seemed shaken, positively afraid, and lay on his bed staring up in silence at the ceiling. He ignored our questions, our jokes, our lewd suggestions about what had passed between them. Eventually we fell silent. When we went down to the beach a little later, Fatty did not come with us.

AFTER SONIA'S DEATH Fatty became convinced that she had had what he called (in a hushed tone of voice) a "premonition," which had made her grab fiercely at what she was determined her life should offer her before it came to its end. For myself, I

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confess that on hearing she had died I felt an emotion almost akin to relief, a sense that something bizarre and puzzling had been explained. So *that,* I could say to myself, was why she had carried on as she had. It wasn't that I shared Fatty's belief that there was something supernatural or inexplicable about Sonia's premonition. She died of a brain tumor. It seemed quite possible to me that her nerves and the cells of her brain had already, when she made her approach to Fatty, begun to undergo changes which she translated into the fervor of her feelings toward him; that the intensity, extravagance, and absurdity of her behavior were the effects of physiological lapses and proliferations which were even then taking place secretly within her.

For at the age of sixteen I had seen no one of the age of sixteen behave as she did. Her passion for Fatty was announced in poetry, and poetry accompanied it throughout; but this didn't exclude a direct expression of a physical hunger or need that all of us, in spite of our brave talk together in our room and our much less brave fumblings under the piers of the promenade, found incredible, almost shocking. I think that had Sonia been simply "poetic" in her feelings about Fatty we might have known how to place her; had she been just physically forward with him we also would have had no difficulty in finding words to describe her. But that she should have been both at the same time—!

Bemused, flattered, and impressed, Fatty could not resist her. He had good reason to be flattered, for Sonia's Fatty was someone none of us could recognize. He was the man of whom all her poets had spoken. He was beautiful, he was kind, he was passionate, he was gentle, dignified, and brave. She admired his swimming, his clothes, the neatness of his hair, the respect his friends had for him. She prophesied all kinds of splendid futures for him—he was to become a famous writer, a great politician, a millionaire, a holy man. When she went to Cape Town for the day with her mother she sent him a telegram assuring him she did not go in weariness of him, nor in hope the world could show a fitter love for her. When she came back she said how like a winter had her absence been from him, the pleasure of the fleeting year; what freezings she had felt, what dark days seen. And she twined her hands around the back of his neck, looked at him with eyes made bright by pleasure and timidity, kissed him on the lips, pressed her body against his, laughed abruptly, sighed, lowered her head and rested it on the hollow of his shoulder, and broke away to look again at him from the distance of her own extended arms.

We saw this kind of thing frequently, for Sonia now spent as much time as she could in our room; and when she was in our room she could not keep away from Fatty, or at least from anything that belonged to Fatty. She put her head on his pillow, touched the sleeves of the pajamas beneath it, played with the laces of the shoes she found under the bed, brushed her hair with his hairbrush and her teeth with his toothbrush. Fatty was embarrassed, of course, by all this, but he was roused, too; there came upon his face at times an expression that none of us had seen before. It was entirely adult—concentrated and yet abstracted, wondering and yet aggressive. But he remained also, throughout, a deeply puzzled boy as well. He was puzzled even by the words Sonia said to him, the lines of poetry she recited to him. He used to consult me about their meaning. " 'Trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,' " I remember him repeating slowly to me. "What does that mean? What kind of cries are those?"

I explained that the word had nothing to do with boots, and Fatty nodded moodily, apparently finding that the removal of this one little source of puzzlement had helped him less than he had hoped.

The rest of the people in the boarding house were, I am sure, unaware that anything was happening to Sonia. When she was on her own her manner remained as shy and graceless as before. Only Fatty—Fatty's presence, or the thought of him when she was talking about him to the rest of us—had the power to set her free, to make her happy, eager, and self-confident. Only Fatty could make her laugh, could make her eyes bright and quick, only when she looked at him was the heaviness of her eyelids expressive of emotions or states—languor, luxury, somnolence—we did not understand or identify but could not help being deeply disturbed by; only when she was with him did her walk have a fluency and ease which was more like a gathering of physical force than a dissipation of it. Despite our shock and embarrassment, I think that by the end of the holiday we were all in love with Sonia, after a fashion, having found it hard to resist the beauty which their intentness gave to her features when she looked at him, the pathos of her movements of surrender and submission, the strength and queer gaiety of her shamelessness.

But Fatty was the only one who had to decide what to make of, what to do with, the love which he had roused and which in his cautious way he couldn't help reciprocating. Sonia's passion presented him with a large moral problem, about which he consulted us liberally. The problem was whether or not he should "go all the way" with Sonia. She was ready to go all the way with him; she made no secret of it, and she had a place, her own bedroom, where this could be accomplished. But Fatty hung back, not knowing if he should. Needless to say, we envied him his problem, though we never doubted that it was a real problem. Would it be right for Fatty "to take advantage" of her feeling for him, when he didn't feel about her as she felt about him? Would it be fair? Should you want to go all the way with a girl you "really cared for"? Wouldn't you "lose

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your respect" for the girl if you did? The logic of our questions indicated that it would be wrong for Fatty to sleep with Sonia if he loved her, and wrong for him to do so if he didn't. So when, if ever, would it be right? All in all, though we spent much time on them, our deliberations on the subject were not of much help to him.

Sonia had her own simple, certain answers to all these questions; she reproached Fatty, sometimes teasingly, sometimes respectfully, always gently, for his unnecessary doubts and scruples. And, while he hesitated, the days went by—days so crowded with sunshine and salt water, with unfamiliar sounds and faces, that each seemed interminable and yet was over too soon, over before we had done with it all that it had seemed to promise. The whole holiday lasted less than a month, though it seems much longer, even now, after so many years have passed.

For our last day we had planned a picnic on the mountainside with some girls we had met. Sonia and Fatty were to come with us, and Sonia had for once gone around the boarding house issuing orders, and overcoming her mother's objections to them, for lavish hampers to be packed for us. But, at the last moment, Fatty announced that he and Sonia would not be coming with us, after all. It needed only one look at Fatty's face for us to know why. None of us objected to his decision; more remarkably still, none of us laughed at it. We did not mention either of them all day.

The picnic was successful: we came back late, weary, sundazed, with our arms around our girls, dragging our empty haversacks behind us. Sonia and Fatty were in the attic room, lying together on Fatty's bed. Fatty asked us what sort of a day we had had, and we told him. There was no need for us to ask what sort of a day he and Sonia had had. Fatty was slow and solemn with pride; in everything he said he seemed to be condescending to the rest of us. Sonia was less altered in manner than he was; she was merely calm and contented. It seemed that her poets had not deceived her, and Fatty had not disappointed her.

SONIA CRIED heartbrokenly on the station platform when she saw us off. The first letter from her to Fatty came when we had been back in Lyndhurst for only two days. He showed me the verse she had written at the end of it:

*Therefore the love which us doth bind,*
*But fate so enviously debars,*
*Is the conjunction of the mind,*
*And opposition of the stars.*

They continued to write to one another until her letters abruptly stopped coming. Then Fatty heard about her illness and her death in a single letter from her mother.

* * *

Fatty is today the father of three children; he still works in the firm which he joined, as he had planned, straight after leaving the university. He deserves his nickname once again, though no one ever calls him by it now. As for Sonia—a long time had to pass before I could admit to myself that my notion that she was already ill when she met Fatty might have been as much a comfort-seeking delusion as his belief that she had had a supernatural "premonition." The truth may be that she was just a girl with an extraordinary gift for love: a gift which she had only that one chance, during our summer holiday in her mother's boardinghouse, to exercise.

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*ROBERT ALTER*

# EPITAPH FOR A JEWISH MAGAZINE

## *Notes on the "Menorah Journal"*

MY FIRST introduction to the *Menorah Journal* was a fittingly formal one. A few years ago, while visiting the home of a Yiddish intellectual, a friend of my parents, in the upstate New York town where I grew up, I happened to say something enthusiastic about COMMENTARY. My host interrupted me with obvious impatience and led me at once to his old-fashioned bookcase, in which two long rows of volumes of the *Menorah Journal* stood locked behind darkly gleaming glass doors. *"That,"* he said, pointing proudly, "was a real Jewish magazine!"

The enthusiasm, as I have since discovered from the perusal of old issues and now from Leo Schwarz's handsome anthology,* was thoroughly warranted. The *Menorah Journal* was surely one of the most exciting episodes in the history of the American-Jewish intellectual community, and its volumes, which extend over nearly half a century, provide a fascinating record of the varying efforts of this community to preserve a meaningful attachment to Jewish culture while participating fully in American intellectual life. One realizes with a little shock that the *Journal*, whose name is scarcely known to my own generation, published its final issue only three years ago. But this, too, is part of its poignant history: after the brilliant flare of activity of its first fifteen years, the magazine was to flicker through a strange half-life for three decades, sustained chiefly by the energy and will of its editor, Henry Hurwitz, ceasing publication only after his death.

The distinctive character of the *Menorah Journal* can be traced back to its origins. The first Menorah Society was organized by a group of Harvard students in 1906, and the spirit of the journal which began nine years later was that of men who had sat at the feet of Santayana, William James, Josiah Royce, and the other great turn-of-the-century Harvard humanists. Horace M. Kallen, who participated in the original group, has some revealing things to say about its aims in a retrospective essay on the "Menorah idea" which he wrote for the valedictory number. The Harvard founders of the movement, according to Kallen, envisaged it as a strictly non-sectarian, non-ideological Jewish cultural group, directly analogous to a collegiate *cercle français* or *Deutscher Verein*. In a period when people spoke openly of a *numerus clausus* at American universities, these students felt the need to work out a positive definition of themselves as Jews to displace the negative one created by the polite but nevertheless palpable hostility they often encountered. The movement spread quickly from Harvard (though never, I think, altogether losing its Harvard tone), so that by 1915, when the first issue of the *Journal* was published, there were thirty-four Menorah Societies; the number was to rise within a few years to more than eighty.

Both the early issues of the *Journal* and Kallen's essay emphasize two key terms in the Menorah quest for Jewishness—Hebraism and humanism. The reasons for the stress on humanism by a non-religious cultural movement are more or less obvious, but it is worth pausing over the importance for the *Menorah* writers of the word "Hebraic." To begin with, the term was meant to draw the line between religionists and individuals who identified only with the cultural tradition which began with the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, it required considerable debate, Kallen writes, before the phrase "Jewish humanism" rather than "Hebraic humanism" was chosen for the *Journal*'s initial statement of purpose. Kallen himself, as late as 1948, still insisted on distinguishing "Jews" (those who accept only the cultural tradition) from "Judaists" (those who also adhere to some form of the Mosaic faith).

The term "Hebraism," moreover, was likely to be associated with Matthew Arnold's famous distinction between "Hebraism" and "Hellenism," and it is precisely within the context of Arnold's work that many of the *Menorah* writers wanted to put the question of their Jewishness. More than one essay of the early years of the *Journal* begins with or somewhere alludes to *Culture and Anarchy*, though the brightest of these pieces refreshingly inverts the original terms, arguing that Arnold's notion of Hellenism corresponds more or less to the historical actualities of Hebra-

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* *The Menorah Treasury*, edited by Leo W. Schwarz, Jewish Publication Society, 963 pp., $10.00.



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ism. The connection with Arnold, however, was less a matter of concepts than of tone; what is most important for the *Menorah* writers is to be able to talk about Judaism in the same terms, in the same refined accents, that the secular high priests of the polite English world used to discuss their culture and history.

It is for this reason that *noblesse oblige* became something of a *Menorah* slogan for Jewish commitment; the phrase occurs in the original statement of purpose and continues to be stressed through to the final issues. The implication, of course, is that Judaism is to be thought of as a spiritual aristocracy, which, in proper aristocratic fashion, calls upon its members to require the finest of themselves, to make the best use of their potential as intelligent human beings—to be, in short, true exponents of "Jewish humanism." This complicated orientation toward Jewishness and the larger cultural world was to have a paradoxical effect on the tenor of the *Menorah Journal* during its peak years.

The determinedly Jewish nature of the *Journal* meant that the scope of its articles was limited to questions of particularly Jewish interest. But in keeping with the humanist program, Jewish interest was broadly defined so that it embraced everything from the Bible to the assassination of Walter Rathenau and the poetry of André Spire. During its great period in the 20's the *Journal* managed very impressively to be specialized without being parochial.

THE CULTURAL ASSURANCE responsible for this achievement, however, was joined to a sense of uneasiness. Interspersed among the many frank—often intriguing—expositions of Jewish experience or vigorous attacks upon Jewish problems, one finds occasional pieces that are nervously anxious to justify such interests. At times, it seems as though the *Menorah Journal* is trying to persuade itself and the world that there is in fact a Jewish humanist tradition, and that this tradition has a direct and vital relationship to Western culture. The main strategy is to validate Jewish cultural phenomena by assimilating them to Western analogues, or, conversely, to interpret Western culture in terms of Jewish influences. Thus, in one of its first numbers, the *Journal* publishes a piece entitled "Sholom Asch: the Jewish Maupassant," and through the early years of the magazine one frequently comes across essays on such subjects as "The Pilgrims and the Hebrew Spirit," "The Hebraic Influence in American Poetry," "The Judaic Strain in Modern Letters." This last article, written by Burton Rascoe, a literary journalist and the editor of *The Bookman*, exemplifies the most distressing type of apologetics to be found in the pages of the *Journal*—appreciations of Jewish culture written by admiring Gentiles. For example, Rascoe's notion of what he calls "the recognizably Jewish characteristics" ranges from intellectual curiosity and cleverness to sexual mysticism, so that he has no trouble at all in discerning Judaic strains in just about anything that matters in Western literature.

The undercurrent of insecurity about belonging to the genteel world of Western letters occasionally rises to the surface in certain pieces that painfully reveal the writer's ambivalence toward his Jewishness. One suggestive document of this sort is "A Friend of Byron" (1926), a study by a very young Lionel Trilling of Isaac Nathan, the man who set the *Hebrew Melodies* to music and also wrote critical observations on Byron's verse. The tone of the essay is so self-consciously British and literary, and "poor Nathan," the culturally aspiring Jew, is treated with such appalling condescension, that it is almost as if Trilling, himself the son of an immigrant, had invented a persona through which to speak: we are allowed to see the alien Jew of mediocre talents only from an immense, stultifying distance of erudite, British otherness. And this Jewish acquaintance of Byron's is, significantly, a man who suffers a painful fall between two cultural stools; he might have been a good enough rabbi, Trilling concludes, but he "envied too greatly the world of the Gentiles" and so ended up as "a bad critic [who] could quote Rashi, Jonathan, son of Huziel, and David Kimhi to support his opinions of English verse."

There is a pleasant and perhaps even instructive irony in the fact that Lionel Trilling, who was to become a very good critic, would one day quote the rabbis effectively to support *his* opinion of Wordsworth's verse. The distance between this early piece and his "Wordsworth and the Rabbis" (1950) can be taken as a partial measure of how much more securely placed the Jewish writer had become in the Anglo-American intellectual world by the 1950's. "A Friend of Byron," to be sure, is not in all respects typical of *Menorah Journal* writing in the 20's, but it lays bare a sense of cultural tensions that underlies many of the contributions to the magazine and at least some aspects of its editorial policy. By the 1950's, of course, Jewish writers and critics had moved from the periphery to the center of American literary culture, so that a main cause for the tension was removed. It began to be natural for a writer to use Jewish materials—if he was fortunate enough to possess any—when they seemed appropriate, with no need first to justify them or reconcile them with the Anglo-American tradition.

But if the *Menorah* intellectuals were at times self-conscious about the cultural tone of their Jewishness, most of them were also far more excited over the creative possibilities of a renewed Jewish culture than the two succeeding generations of American Jews have been, and it is this quality of excitement that marks the *Journal*'s first fifteen years. Its pages are alive with the ferment of renaissance. In contrast to the successors of the *Menorah Journal*—maga-

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zines which have centered around the act of criticism, the stance being typically analytical and detached—Henry Hurwitz's magazine in its first fifteen years was a focus for synthesizing and constructive energies. Critical intelligence is abundantly present, but quite frequently it is used much less to observe and assess than to clear away the rotten lumber of the past and present—and then to lay the foundation for some huge edifice of reconstructed Jewish life. The earlier issues of the *Journal* bristle with essays whose titles proclaim the intention of their authors to begin with basic questions and to propose ultimate goals—"The Choice Before Jewry," "Can Judaism Survive in the United States?," "A Search for the True Community," and so forth. It is hardly surprising that Mordecai Kaplan's ambitious project for the reconstruction of Judaism was first articulated in the pages of the *Menorah Journal* during its early years.

Perhaps the best statement of this constructive impulse in the *Journal* and of the ideal that guided its relation to the Jewish past is Marvin Lowenthal's luminously intelligent essay, "On a Jewish Humanism" (1924). If humanism can easily decay into a vague creed of high-mindedness which merely serves to screen the mind from realities, Lowenthal describes eloquently how it can also develop into an enlarging way of life in which the mind opens itself continually to the astoundingly variegated facts of lived experience and accumulated culture. "The destruction of habitual notions," he writes, "under the shock of facts is itself a humanizing process. It is a spiritual calisthenics and limbers not only the mind, but that dim seat of our deepest instincts, the core of impulse and prejudice we call the soul." A Jewish humanism, then, would break down all of our petrified reductionist conceptions of the nature of Jewishness; the inquiring Jew would discover a collective history that was immensely richer and more ambiguously diverse than any simple program of commitment or rejection could possibly conceive. And there would be a particular personal value in his choosing to explore the Jewish experience. Being a Jew, he would be more intimately in touch with this body of experience, having already seen and felt how at least some aspects of it were actually lived. Moreover, because of the unique development of Jewish culture—intricately bound up in the Western majority culture and yet always distinct from it—Jewish humanism offered the intellectual an invaluable critical perspective on the Western world.

The exhilaration of discovery that Lowenthal succeeds in transmitting by means of his own full sense of the multiplicity of Jewish experience is precisely the feeling that animates the *Menorah Journal* during its best years. One senses it equally in the essays which are searching for the elusive meanings and the obscured facts of the past, and in those which are struggling to come to terms with the dilemmas of the Jewish present.

THE HISTORICAL essays published in the *Journal* during this period are particularly remarkable. Written mainly by scholars, they have little of the special narrowness we tend to associate with academic writing and, on the other hand, none of the subtle condescension of popularization. Without insight-hunting or tendentiousness, the historical writers manage to make palpable their own sense of the relevance of their subjects. The quality of mind which the Menorah enterprise attracted is suggested by the fact that three young scholars who in the early years became regular contributors are today perhaps the three most distinguished authorities on the Jewish past in the English-speaking world: Salo Baron, Cecil Roth, and Harry Wolfson.

The scope of the historical writing in the *Journal* is as striking as its quality. Some of the essays explore suggestive curiosities of Jewish history—like Roth's fascinating piece, "The Slave Community of Malta." Others use the tools of historical analysis to effect radical reassessments of entire ages—like Baron's attack on the whole "lachrymose interpretation" of Jewish history in "Ghetto and Emancipation." Still other essays illumine great figures of the past to make their meaning for the present freshly intelligible—like Morris R. Cohen's argument for the permanent validity of Spinoza or Wolfson's more recent discussion of Spinoza and religion. But in all these cases, one of the implicit intentions of the writer is to startle the reader into a realization that the Jewish past is more complex and certainly more interesting than his cherished stereotypes of it.

What was happening in contemporary Jewish life was given the same breadth of coverage. When, for example, the community in Palestine was shaken by the Arab uprising of 1929, the *Menorah Journal* followed the events in a typically exhaustive manner: there was an eyewitness account of the attacks by Edward Robbin, a young American living in Jerusalem; an analytic overview of the situation by Maurice Samuel, also written from Palestine; surveys of the American and Palestinian press reaction; and finally an assessment of the future of Arab-Jewish relations by the editor. During the same months Salo Baron's articles on "Nationalism and Intolerance" were appearing in the *Journal,* and, though they were concerned mainly with Europe, they clearly had bearing on the broader political questions involved in the Palestinian conflict. One might imagine a Zionist monthly or a Middle-East newsletter covering such an occurrence in similar detail, but the general effect would be very different. The *Menorah Journal* could do it while remaining a Jewish periodical of general intellectual interest: the coverage in depth was itself the expression of intellect grappling with intractable and even

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ominous actualities, trying to make sense of them and, perhaps, in so doing, to influence their future course.

The editors of the *Menorah Journal* were always proud of the fact that they had never belonged to what they called the Jewish Establishment in America, and their freedom from party, sect, or institution did strengthen their ability to offer both a variety of perspectives on a given problem and the perspective of variety on the subjects which they regarded as Jewish. The diversity of interests and cultural habitats of the regular contributors is remarkable. Academic experts on Jewish history and philosophy (Roth, Wolfson, and others) rub shoulders with free-lance Jewish journalists (Maurice Samuel, Herbert Solow); literary Jews (Israel Zangwill, Ludwig Lewisohn, Charles Reznikoff) with Jewish littérateurs (Trilling, Clifton Fadiman, Louis Untermeyer, Babette Deutsch); rabbis and religious ideologues (David De Sola Pool, Mordecai Kaplan) with secularist social thinkers (Lewis Mumford, Irwin Edman). A few of the Jewish periodicals today try to provide a similar diversity, but in the *Menorah Journal* the extremes are further apart and the contrasts are surely sharper.

One might even say there were two *Menorah Journals* in the 1920's poised in precarious coexistence. On the one hand are the writers whose primary concern is with the larger cultural community and with how, as Jews, they are to participate in it. On the other hand—often an editorial hand—are the observers of the organized Jewish community, who carefully scan everything from recent rabbinic sermons to fund-raising reports and the local Jewish press, and who act as permanent critics of the Jewish Establishment, almost as a kind of shadow rabbinate. The double nature of the *Journal* during this period is vividly reflected in the advertisements carried in its pages. The various theological seminaries enumerate the attractions of their programs beneath suitably grim-looking photographs of their buildings; and, on facing pages, *The Dial* announces the first American publication of *The Waste Land*, or the *Yale Review* lists the distinguished critics and writers of fiction among its contributors. Such strange juxtapositions were part of the distinctive *Menorah* spirit: certainly there has been no journal since whose readership has had an equally keen interest both in what was happening within the seminary walls and on the advanced fronts of creative writing.

By 1931, however, there are few advertisements of any sort in the *Menorah Journal*, and these are mainly for books on Jewish topics or books by regular contributors. The *Journal*, and the Menorah Movement as well, had been badly crippled by the Depression; in 1931 it interrupted regular publication for the first time since it was founded. A bimonthly in its early years and a monthly in the late 20's, the *Journal* now made a limping reappearance as a quarterly, on which basis it was issued—with increasing intermittence—until its demise. But the heaviest blow struck by the Depression was ideological rather than financial. In 1929, the Menorah vision of a humanist renaissance had appeared to be firmly located within the central arena of intellectual life in America. Two years later, the vision had simply become irrelevant. Against the urgent claims on conscience of the radical movements, the *Journal's* quest for high culture must have seemed like the most effete *fin-de-siècle* decadence and its insistence on Jewish identity a reactionary gesture of pathetic futility. With its occupation gone, it lost valuable staff members as well as writers; in fact, many of its regulars soon began to appear in the newly founded *Partisan Review* and other radical magazines.

The *Menorah Journal* logically should have died at this point, but Henry Hurwitz, who had edited it from the beginning and committed his whole life to the Menorah enterprise, was determined to keep it going. But the kind of existence the magazine was to lead during its subsequent long decline was, perhaps inevitably, an unconscious parody of those qualities which had earlier distinguished it. The ideal of culture without a broad base of purposeful intellectual activity produced a journal that reminds one of the annual of a fine arts museum. The tone is distinguished: tasteful reproductions of Jewish art treasures on the cover and within, attractively elegant layout, contributors with the best of formal credentials. What is missing—with occasional exceptions—is the feeling that anything urgent is being said, or that there is any audience beyond an isolated coterie to whom to say it.

Nothing could illustrate this predicament more clearly than Robert Gordis's essay, "Marxism and Religion," written for the magazine in 1937. One could not imagine a more crucial issue for a *Menorah Journal* article to have grappled with at that point in time. But Rabbi Gordis's statement—reasonable, articulate, well-formed—lacks any imagination of the presence of a real antagonist. Marxism, we are calmly and firmly assured, has been unjustly intolerant of religion, for religion insists upon social justice just as Marxism does (cf. Isaiah, Micah, et al.), and it fulfills deep human needs that can never be supplied by a materialistic social philosophy. Certainly this question was worth debating, but Gordis seems to be debating it only with himself, with the editors of the *Menorah Journal*, and with the members of his suburban congregation—hardly with the *Partisan Review* intellectuals.

As rabbinical contributors to the *Menorah Journal* multiply in its later years, more and more of the articles leave one with the impression that the solutions to the agonizing problems of modern Jewry are relatively clear-cut and perhaps even

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ready-made. The old intellectual apparatus is still very much in evidence—the high-powered vocabularies with their "metamyths," "self-verifying experiences," and so forth; the easy references to Kierkegaard, Kafka, and all the rest of those touchstones of modern intellectual gamesmanship. But more often than not, the elaborate-looking structures of thought are erected only to support a sermon, and a rather ordinary one at that. Hurwitz himself begins to sound at times like a lay preacher, in praising, for example, "the glories of our American freedom" with a tired rhetoric and a tired, but desperately insistent, marshalling of ideas.

This desperate insistence on an irrelevant message is probably the unhappiest aspect of the *Menorah Journal* in the years of its decline. In the 20's, the renaissance vision of the *Journal* had given birth to a number of projects for the dissemination of the Jewish humanist heritage—a Menorah Summer School, a Menorah Institute for Adult Studies, a Menorah Lecture Bureau. Each of these activities sustained itself for a time, and the lecture bureau also provided a substantial source of income for some of the writers who helped to make the *Journal* what it was. In the 40's and 50's, Hurwitz, with an imagination still fired by the renaissance idea, spins out scheme after unrealized scheme—a Menorah College, a Menorah board of experts to write a Menorah Judaica Library, a nationwide congress of representatives to replace the power structure of the Jewish Establishment. There is something grand as well as pathetic in these final motions of an idea that had outlived its time. Hurwitz himself, in his last public address, catches the mood of his own enterprise perfectly by describing it wryly as a "somewhat quixotic cultivation of the Jewish vineyard."

AT THE SAME time that the *Journal* was tilting at windmills with increasing frequency, the independence of party that had characterized it in its early years was being transformed into a partisan sense of hostility toward the Jewish world for having left the Menorah idea behind. This process is most clearly detectable in the position on Zionism. During the 1920's *Menorah* writers had shown considerable sympathy for Ahad Ha-am's cultural Zionism, which was much more in keeping with the non-ideological, "culturist" emphasis of the magazine than was Herzl's political Zionism. By 1932, this sympathy translated itself explicitly into editorial support for *Brit Shalom,* the group that was working for the establishment of a binational state of Arabs and Jews; Hurwitz himself begins to sound a little strident in rejecting the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine as "a hopeless aberration." After World War II, the *Journal* takes a progressively critical stand on Zionism that will end as a flirtation with the militantly anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism. This final stage begins in 1945, notably enough with Hannah Arendt's essay "Zionism Reconsidered," a withering attack on the Zionist leadership and program.

The presence of Miss Arendt shows that even in its decline the *Menorah Journal* was still able to command writers of great intellectual sophistication. Such writers, though, tended to be either disaffected Jews who had some quarrel with the organized community, such as Miss Arendt, or Jews who did not find themselves comfortable with the prevailing political views or the cultural style of the intellectual community. Sidney Hook, for example, begins to contribute to the *Journal* in 1937 with an assault on the naïveté of Jews who support Communism; Moses Hadas, a rare authentic humanist in the original Menorah spirit of high culture, remains a frequent contributor from the late 1930's till the end. And there are, of course, a few writers of stature—the most conspicuous is Cecil Roth—who, having developed a loyalty to the *Journal* in its twice seven years of plenty, continue to contribute to it through the long lean years.

The real life of the *Menorah Journal,* however, was elsewhere—in the successors it had inspired while it still continued to publish. There has been something of the Menorah idea, and, in fact, some of the *Menorah* writers, in every Jewish journal of intellectual aspirations that has appeared since the late 1930's. Its most direct heir, of course, is COMMENTARY, whose original editor, Elliot E. Cohen, was the managing editor of the *Journal* during some of its best years. The magazine Cohen founded continues to resemble the *Menorah Journal* at its peak in being a Jewish periodical close to the center of the American intellectual scene, and in its fidelity to the traditions of literate critical discourse.

In a 1928 editorial written on the occasion of the change-over of the *Journal* from bimonthly to monthly, Hurwitz, looking back on the preceding thirteen years of activity, asserted that "*The Menorah Journal* has marked the emergence of a new force in American Jewish life . . . the force of modern critical intelligence." The relationship between that force and American Jewish life has often seemed tense, sometimes hostile. But any kind of Jewish life that fails to give a central role to critical intelligence would appear to most of us to be no longer worth living. It is not easy to imagine what may be produced by the shifting interplay of criticism and community or criticism and tradition. Yet whatever the result, it will continue to owe something to the *Menorah Journal* and its vision of the integration of Jewish identity and the full life of the intellect.

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# VIETNAM AND CHINA

*GEORGE LICHTHEIM*

THIS DEPARTMENT, though currently conducted by an expatriate European, is not immune from the strains cast upon Atlantic relations by the differences in American and European ways of viewing the world. Whether or not the two halves of the Western alliance continue to march together, there is no denying that just now their union is threatened by something else besides the re-awakening of nationalism in Europe. That something else is the trouble Europeans are having in trying to make sense of American policies in Asia.

There is, of course, no unified European viewpoint. The British until recently have tended to follow the American lead, though with considerable misgivings, and perhaps more from concern over Malaya (and the pound sterling) than from conviction. Now there are rumblings about "escalation" and the use of gas, and Mr. Michael Stewart, on his first visit to Washington in his capacity as Foreign Secretary, publicly urged "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind"—a remark that went widely unreported and drew no audible comment from anyone in authority, though there appear to have been some private grumbles. French opinion in these matters is pretty solidly behind de Gaulle: a circumstance carefully concealed from the readers of the American press, who must be wondering how the General still manages after seven years to retain his hold, seeing that (if they can believe the editorials and "news reports" in their daily journals) everyone in France is against him. In Italy, most people take their line from the Vatican or the Kremlin, as the case may be, but there are also a few liberals, and they are unhappy. The Germans—if they think about the matter at all—publicly toe the Washington line, and in private ask U.S. diplomats to please explain what President Johnson may have in mind, and whether he really wants to drift into another Korean campaign. The smaller West European countries tend to echo these preoccupations, though with predictable nuances. Thus the Dutch and the Scandinavians are understandably more upset about scorched-earth tactics, and the use of gas and napalm, than are the Germans. After all, it is not easy for Germans—even of the well-meaning sort—to wax indignant in public about gas warfare without stirring up uncomfortable emotions among their countrymen.

For obvious reasons, the French reaction is the most definite. This is partly because national self-confidence has been restored by the Gaullist regime—I apologize for laboring this theme, but there is a conspiracy of silence on the topic, notably in the British journals reaching this country. Mostly, however, the French reaction is so clear-cut because they know from experience that land wars in Southeast Asia cannot be won: at any rate not if they have to be fought under the kind of conditions prevailing in Vietnam. The French also remember their own blunder in pushing Ho Chi Minh much further in the direction of China than he had originally planned to go, and they are concerned that the United States seems about to repeat the mistake. Lastly, they are fed up with crusading rhetoric about "fighting Communism." The last time talk like this was heard in France was when it was employed to justify the Algerian war, and most Frenchmen would rather not be reminded of that experience.

IF A unified West European standpoint could be formulated—if, that is to say, there were an effective European political organization—one might safely wager that the consensus would take a form not far removed from what is vulgarly known as "neutralism." The Americans, in other words, would be told politely that, while there was much sympathy for their current troubles, and some diminishing understanding for their political tactics, they had better not count on any material or moral support if they land themselves in a war with China. They might also be informed that their political stock would go up considerably if they were able to make it plain that they were aiming at a compromise settlement in Southeast Asia, and not at a fight to the finish with an abstraction called "Communism," which in Asia anyhow is difficult to distinguish from revolutionary nationalism. For contrary to a widespread notion, no one in Western Europe—or even in Eastern Europe—really minds about a bit of bombing. What people are worried about is the attitude behind it. Europeans have been brought up on *Realpolitik*, and they understand the argument that pressure may be needed to induce the other side to see reason and attend a peace conference. What they do not understand is talk of "stopping Communism," when it is perfectly



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obvious that the real issue is how to extricate oneself from a guerrilla war which can go on for another decade (if everyone's patience lasts that long).

It may seem that I am crediting the average European with a good deal of political sophistication, but really these topics are not as difficult as all that. It is true that at the higher ranges of the political pyramid one comes upon more technical arguments, but if it is a matter of carrying public opinion along, it needs to be said quite plainly that public opinion is not impressed by the official talk about "defending freedom." People are quite well aware (I suspect they are also aware of it in this country) that there is no freedom to be defended in either North or South Vietnam, and that the only thing at stake in this war is the balance of power. This of course involves imponderables, such as making the Chinese understand that the United States is not a "paper tiger." Granted that, one may still, out of the depths of one's innocence, wonder about a political strategy which seems purposely designed to persuade the whole of Asia that Peking is right when it paints the struggle as a racial war between Westerners and Asians. What is so serious about it is that the West's remaining political and moral capital is being endangered by these tactics. In this perspective, the reserve demonstrated in London and Paris is in everyone's interest. If Washington must go on blundering, at least the blame should not fall upon the West as a whole. It is a reversal of the Suez situation, though this time the consequences are potentially much more serious.

COMPARED with this long-term perspective, the ineptitude of U.S. diplomacy is relatively unimportant, though all the professionals must be wringing their hands at the failure to put the onus on China. Why should so much time have been wasted before the announcement that Washington was ready at any time to attend a peace conference? One suspects that the failure to make this obvious move was tied up with the old emotional tangle over China: it would have meant "recognizing" Peking (as if Mao cared: he already has all the recognition he wants). As for the current attempt to combine military pressure with diplomatic overtures, it is unlikely to come off. Peking and Hanoi have made it perfectly plain that it suits them to let the war in Vietnam go on as long as it can; in the circumstances the thing to do was to work toward something along the lines of the Laotian settlement or some other form of neutralization. Such a move would have embarrassed no one except the Chinese. It would have pleased the Indians and the Japanese, and need not have precluded further resistance to armed inroads from the North: especially if it is really the case—as is suggested in an interesting article in the April issue of *Foreign Affairs*—that there exists a genuine species of nationalism in South Vietnam which is *not* tied up with the Catholic minority and is neither pro-Chinese nor neutralist.

THIS LAST, of course, is the crux of the whole business. No country in the world, least of all South Vietnam, can go on forever subsisting on anti-Communism. Unless genuine national feeling is involved—it need not be widespread: it need only, in the first instance, be the property of the political and military elite—the structure must crumble. Conversely, the genuine nationalists may very well decide at some stage to dispense with their Western protectors: especially if the latter show a propensity to treat the country and its inhabitants as mere pawns in a complicated game of political chess. This is the real argument against scorched-earth tactics. It is also the point where politics cannot be divorced from morals. The notion of such a divorce is attractive to some people. They can indeed expose the element of hysteria or hypocrisy in the outcry against gas among publicists who for years were silent about the use of napalm (an even more unpleasant weapon). But in the end it is not possible to pretend that wars can be fought in a political and moral vacuum. Other things being equal, the side that mobilizes popular sentiment is bound in the long run to win. What the American case lacks is a convincing demonstration that public opinion in Southeast Asia favors the Western side. If the local nationalist movements are driven into hostility by Western terror tactics, the political loss is bound to outweigh the short-run military gain.

Meanwhile one notes that, according to the London *Spectator* (a Conservative weekly) "much of Britain is bored to death by the whole business. Despite clouds of pious talk about the perils of 'escalation' and the possible 'collapse of Southeast Asia,' the number of people in the average street who could distinguish Da Nang and Nguyen Cao Ky, let alone explain that the one is an airbase and the other the commander of the Vietnamese air force, would be outnumbered by the Prime Ministers South Vietnam has had in the past few months." The British, of course, have plenty of other things to worry about, and are not too well informed about Malaya either. Nonetheless this state of mind must be fairly widespread.

IGNORANCE ABOUT China is another matter. It is not confined to the man in the street, but affects us all, save for the handful of specialists on whom the rest of us willy-nilly depend for our information. The trouble with the experts is that they tend to be afflicted by the modes of thought they are obliged to study. Some of them in the end become as rigid and pedantic as the Peking editorialists: now formally committed to the duty of repeating the same lesson for the benefit of their Russian pupils "even if we have to do it for ten thousand years." Others tend to lose themselves in

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the mists of Chinese history. I have myself heard one eminent lecturer tell a gathering of fellow-academics that "a great deal of further work" will have to be done on the foreign policy of the Chinese Emperors in the 13th and 14th centuries before an adequate "model" of Mao Tse-tung's political strategy can be "constructed." This kind of approach does not strike me as helpful, any more than does the attempt to deduce China's probable future conduct from Mao's childish interpretation of Hegel (or, to be exact, Lenin). Academic pedantry—harmless enough in itself and always good for a laugh wherever two or three colleagues are gathered together—can become a hindrance to the perception of those aspects of reality that concern all of us.

At the other end of the spectrum there are the "diplomatic correspondents" with their inside information, and the reporters with their notebooks. Some of the latter tend to double as propagandists. I suppose no one is surprised, on opening the *New Statesman* and seeing a prominently displayed conversation between Chou En-lai and the inevitable K. S. Karol, to find Chou sounding exceedingly reasonable and statesmanlike, though quite uncompromising as to the substance of Peking's quarrel with Moscow. The whole thing, it seems, comes down to different interpretations of Marx and Lenin. (One is reminded of the Soviet diplomat in Peking who told a French journalist: "We are not going to argue with the Chinese. They have detailed one million men to look up quotations. We have more important things to do.") Some of us are skeptical of such explanations, and our suspicions are fed by bits of information (perhaps leaked by the Russians) about Peking's real attitude. Thus on March 12 the Moscow correspondent of the *Spectator*, having duly covered the meeting of the nineteen Communist parties, informed his readers that the conflict between the Russians and the Chinese had more to do with Clausewitz than with Hegel.

> Mao, it is said, has conveyed to the Soviet leaders that, whatever they may say or do, there is absolutely no chance of China and Russia coming together. . . . He argues that a war between the imperialists and the socialist camp is inevitable within the next ten or fifteen years . . . unity will come about only when the danger of this war is imminent, not before. But now Mao claims that it will not be the nuclear holocaust which he forecast before his own atomic power: on the contrary, it will be a conventional war on a large scale, for which the Chinese are now preparing. He advises the Russians to follow his example. He has also made it clear to them that China does not want to get involved in the Vietnam conflict. According to him, some damage done to North Vietnam will not be all that tragic, and the Vietnamese can look after themselves.

Now the odd thing—and I only mention it as proof that scholarly expertise need not be wholly useless, however boring it may seem at times—is that this casual bit of information dovetails with what one is told by the experts. The latter have now come to the conclusion that Chinese strategy reckons with the probability of conventional warfare taking place under the nuclear "umbrella," provided the latter is extended impartially to protect all concerned. China's own accession to nuclear status is seen as a means of equalizing the score, so that in future it will be possible to run considerable risks short of nuclear escalation. In this perspective a distinction is drawn between war (regarded as inevitable) and total war (which can perhaps be avoided). Where Peking differs from Moscow is in holding that the way to avoid total war is not by seeking agreement with the West, but by applying steady pressure upon it, and in particular by separating the U.S. from its allies. Such a policy involves risks which the Soviet regime in its present mood is unwilling to run. Whence the continuance of rude noises from Peking. This assessment has the backing of some distinguished "game theorists" who specialize in Sino-Sovietology. It can also be argued on common-sense grounds; above all, it is consistent with the facts of China's behavior. Why then does it get so little publicity?

The answer, it seems to me, has to do with the whole emotional complex about China which has grown up in the West during recent years. Because so much rubbish was talked about Chinese Communism, people who instinctively felt that the Chinese were entitled to their own kind of revolution have been reluctant to inquire into the nature of Chinese *nationalism*. Had they done so, they might have come up with conclusions distressing to their comfortable liberal prepossessions. Since the air was full of noise about "Red China," it seemed better to stay silent, or to take the line that it was the West's fault if Chinese revolutionary nationalism had assumed this particular form. Only since the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet quarrel has it become morally respectable in liberal and socialist quarters to inquire whether there may not perhaps be something genuinely alarming about Peking's particular view of the world.

THE DIFFICULTY here is that it is perfectly possible for the Chinese to combine tactical reasonableness and flexibility with a profoundly dangerous misunderstanding of world realities. So far as the day-to-day conduct of affairs is concerned, it is arguable that Peking has moved with considerable caution. Mao and his senior colleagues have evidently been concerned to dispel the notion —publicly voiced by personalities as different as Khrushchev, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, and Mr. Joseph Alsop—that they don't care if the world blows up. They have also been at pains to minimize the significance of their own recent atomic test. It was M. Couve de Murville, not Chou En-

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lai, who described China as "the fifth nuclear power." No such claims have been made in Peking. It has been left to foreign enthusiasts—from the Indonesian CP to the pro-Chinese group of Australian Communists and the "Thai liberation movement"—to hail the change in the international balance of power supposedly resulting from the first Chinese nuclear test last October. Mao Tse-tung, in talking to Edgar Snow, made no such assertion, and all the official comment in Peking is about the length of time it will take to get beyond the experimental stage.

This, however, does not preclude an assessment of the world situation which differs quite markedly from the Soviet view and has become highly embarrassing to the Russians. It can be summed up by saying that the Chinese believe it has now become marginally safer for them to aid "wars of national liberation" in Asia and elsewhere. As time goes on, they are likely to feel that even greater risks can be taken with a reasonable degree of immunity. In the interval they will clearly exercise as much tactical caution as is required to reassure the neutrals and to safeguard themselves from the danger of a preventive nuclear strike on the part of the United States. On the assumptions made in Peking about "American imperialism," such a preventive strike must loom as a constant danger. Indeed Mao and his colleagues may be wondering why it has not already occurred.

It is this mental climate that differentiates the Chinese attitude from the Russian. The USSR and the USA are almost equally matched, as their "space rivalry" shows, and tend inevitably to think in terms of competing for first place. Such rivalry presupposes a tacit understanding that certain rules are to be observed. China is outside the game, and not disposed to observe any rules, except purely tactical ones. The basic assumptions behind the Chinese attitude are rooted in a revolutionary faith which has not yet run dry. It is as though Mao and his colleagues were saying to the Russians: "We had originally counted on you to lead the Communist bloc to victory over the common enemy, but if you refuse to take the risk, we will do it ourselves." China alone—not the Sino-Soviet bloc as a whole—is to become the assembly-ground of all the revolutionary forces grouped against the "imperialist camp." In this context, it is immaterial whether the Chinese are serious about abjuring nuclear blackmail. Perhaps no major power can be trusted not to use such means of pressure, but that is another matter. What counts is the conviction that a future nuclear stalemate will favor limited "wars of liberation." Quite evidently it is this belief that animates China's long-term strategy.

Now it is not possible to pretend that this can be a matter of indifference to the rest of the world as long as certain rules of the nuclear game are respected. In the first place, they won't be: there are already signs of both India and Pakistan entering the race, and thereafter all talk of "non-dissemination" will become a joke. Secondly, even if nuclear arms are merely held in reserve, Peking's willingness to risk "conventional" war for the sake of spreading its highly idiosyncratic version of Communism (better described perhaps as Chinese National Socialism) is ominous. Whoever takes the trouble to study Chinese utterances must be impressed by the extent to which the leaders continue to harp on the lessons of their own civil war. It is not too much to say that they see their conflict with the USA as an extension of their lengthy struggle against Chiang Kai-shek.

This radical inability to see the world as it really is can go quite comfortably with considerable sophistication in the handling of diplomatic contacts, or in the manipulation of technical and scientific resources. Thus Peking has been able to extend its influence within the Communist camp at the expense of the Soviet Union: a considerable achievement, given the disproportion in material means and the initial prestige of the USSR as the fountainhead of doctrine. China has also made gains among the uncommitted countries in Africa and Asia. But all these successes have been at the level of intra-Communist political warfare; they have not affected the fundamental balance of power. Mao's tactics quite simply do not work when applied to fields other than that of inter-bloc political and propagandist rivalry. He is able to embarrass the Russians *qua* Communists, but not to change the orientation of Russia as a world power. To do so he would have to provoke a major conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States.

THIS IS why Vietnam matters as a test-case of international power politics in the nuclear age. The unfortunate inhabitants of that country, north and south, are paying the price of a political chess game conducted over their heads by the strategists in Washington, Moscow, and Peking. For it would be naïve to think that the Chinese have no ax to grind and are merely trying to help the revolution forward. From Peking's standpoint, the war in Southeast Asia is a means of preventing or postponing that over-all settlement between the USA and the USSR which is Mao's chief nightmare. Every new "escalation" reinforces the waning influence of China's friends in Moscow, constrains the Russians to observe "Communist solidarity," and at the same time undermines their influence in Asia, since whatever they do, they can always be accused of not doing enough. Hence Peking's indifference to all talk of a round-table conference in Geneva. It is not that the Chinese are in principle opposed to negotiation, but they want to be taken seriously and confront the USA directly on an equal footing, and on the whole agenda: Formosa included. Which is as much as to say that they regard themselves as the dominant power in Asia. Meanwhile the longer the war in Vietnam goes on, the better it suits them.

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## OBSERVATIONS

# SOUTHERN MYTHOLOGY

C. Vonn Woodward

THE MAKING OF Southern mythology has not been an exclusively regional enterprise. No doubt Southerners themselves have been the most prolific contributors, but they have had too much assistance from outside to claim exclusive authorship. Northern contributions derive in part from felt needs and deprivations of Yankee culture that have sought fulfillment in compensatory fantasy. They include a secret yen for aristocracy and the associated airs of grace and decorum, an abiding nostalgia for an America that never really was. William R. Taylor, in *Cavalier and Yankee,* has shown to what a large extent the Cavalier myth was a Yankee creation and that few if any Southerners "really believed in the Cavalier—only in the need for him." Other components of the Northern contribution derive from an uneasy national conscience and the availability of the South as a repository for undischarged guilt as well as a convenient target for aggression. The dark legend of the Gothic South, land of evil, bad blood, degeneracy, and violence, owes much to this source.

Southern contributions to the myth grow out of more conventional needs for defense, self-flattery, and inter-sectional polemics. And on a more serious level they are part of the unending struggle to make the collective experience intelligible and meaningful. Whatever differences may exist between Northern and Southern sources and their respective handiwork, on one point there is general agreement—that the South is "different." And whether the differences are regarded with dismay and abhorrence or with pride and complacence, they are commonly described as deep and probably ineradicable.

Throughout the confrontation between North and South over school desegregation, civil rights, and voter registration there has been a mounting impatience among friends of the Negro movement with the uses to which the national mythology about the South have too frequently been put. The myth of a mysterious distinctiveness beyond the reach of reason and impervious to change has been employed as a fog to hide realities, an excuse for inaction, evasion, and postponement. It has helped to slow Deliberate Speed to a halt, to rationalize tokenism, and to justify defeatism. It is common to the thinking of liberals and moderates as well as conservatives and reactionaries. It is a mainstay of Southern defiance and a salve for Northern conscience.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that a recent Northern work on Southern mythology should take the form of iconoclasm. This is a book by Howard Zinn that he chooses to call *The Southern Mystique.** It is clear that he means *myth* instead of *mystique.* A mystique is entirely the creation and possession of an in-group. One can speak of the mystique *of* a group and a myth *about* a group. But one cannot properly write, as Mr. Zinn does, of "the American mystique about the South," or "the mystique with which Americans have always surrounded the South." The distinction is important because he is talking about a national credo, not a regional dogma. "We created the mystery of the South," he declares, "and we can dissolve it." "We," meaning Americans of all sections.

The avowed purpose of the book is "to dispose of the myth of Southern exceptionalism," to do it in, the whole thing, once and for all. Mystery in any department is anathema and must be banished. Mr. Zinn's method is not to deny the South the formidable array of characteristics traditionally attributed to it, but to concede them and at the same time to claim them all as American characteristics. The South is simply America exaggerated, "the essence of the nation." The South is different without being distinctive. "It is different because it is a distillation of those traits which are the worst (and a few which are the best) in the national character." The South "crystallizes the defects." Instead of glossing over national faults by attributing them all to the South, Americans should regard the South "as a mirror in which the nation can see its blemishes magnified." To do so would be to turn self-flattery into self-recognition and insight of therapeutic value. The nation is thus not seen as the doctor, "but the next patient in line." We are all sick.

In the long roster of its revilers the South has rarely had so genial and disarming a critic. What has poisoned the North-South colloquy for a century and a half has been the standing indictment of self-righteousness and hypocrisy. The classic riposte of the South under attack is *tu quoque*: you're another—what about Harlem? Mr. Zinn's strategy is to smother the question with concessions. Harlem is "as terrible as any colored section of a Deep South city." Racism afflicts "the entire mind and body of the American nation" and forms a "basic community of interest of all sections of the United States, reaching back to our earliest history." He obligingly documents these concessions with chapter and verse. New Jersey burned

* Knopf, 267 pp., $4.95.



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two Negroes at the stake for setting fire to barns in 1741, and in the same year New York hanged eighteen and burned thirteen alive—two a week, one hanged, one burned. And so on through the appalling record of the two centuries that followed, including the shameful timidity, vacillation, and compromise of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the betrayal, desertion, and oppression of the years since. The conclusion is that "there is no part of the United States where Negroes as a group have ever stood equal with whites." The South remains, however, the main bastion of racism, "a kind of Fort Knox of prejudice—where the nation has always stored the bulk of its bigotry, while the rest has circulated—though sometimes stealthily—all over the country." The failure of national policy against racial discrimination and injustice is, nevertheless, attributed to "national weakness rather than to Dixie strength."

Having thus disposed of the myth of racist exceptionalism in the South, Mr. Zinn turns to other alleged Southern peculiarities in the same spirit of iconoclasm. These include such themes as violence, fundamentalism, xenophobia, nativism, chauvinism, absence of class feeling, prevalence of poverty, and what W. J. Cash called "downright gyneolatry," the cult of Southern womanhood. Like racism these are all conceded to be Southern traits, but at the same time the South is denied exclusiveness in their possession. They, too, are American. Mr. Zinn does not tackle all the myths, and the best he can do for his thesis in some cases is to maintain that the Southern characteristic is "only an intense form of what has gone on for so long in the whole nation," or that "such differences between North and South have been matters of degree, based on time and circumstances." Of course a sufficient difference in degree can produce a noticeable difference in kind. For all that, it is as well to have some towering pretensions toppled and a sense of proportion, not to say humor, restored.

One conspicuous omission among Mr. Zinn's targets of Southern exceptionalism is the historical experience of the region. This is not an oversight. With the best will in the world for sharing guilt, paranoia, and tragedy, the doctrine of anti-exceptionalism cannot be stretched to endow the North with the South's past. Other Americans are fortunate enough not to share two-and-a-half centuries of chattel slavery, a wild and disastrous adventure in secession and independence ending in crushing defeat, and another century begun with an abortive reconstruction and ending in a second one still in progress. Yet this is the only authentic basis of the South's claim to a distinctive heritage. That heritage can be, often has been, abused, but its distinctiveness cannot be denied.

Mr. Zinn, a historian, does not deny it. He dismisses it. His conviction is that we have an "overly heavy sense of history," and that "we are too much impressed with the power of the past. . . . Transfixed by the past, we escape responsibility for acting in the present. Thus history has become a burden rather than a guide. . . ." He would have us throw off the incubus of history, a 19th-century obsession, and dwell upon "all the possibilities for purposive social change in that old political adage which says that the public has a poor memory." It is only because 20th-century examples are "obnoxious to us" that we ignore the social lessons of "Hitler transforming the German people, the Communists burying centuries in Russia and millennia in China." All of which prove that "the past need not rest heavily on a determined people."

ALONG WITH the past, Mr. Zinn would cast off the burden of Freudian psychology, which he considers as much of an incubus upon the individual as history is upon society. Like history, this school of psychology, with its stress on the long arm of the past, especially the determinants of early childhood experience upon lifelong behavior, has "led to a pervasive pessimism about man and society." He embraces instead the "situational psychology" of men like Gardner Murphy, who hold that "the present situation may be far more important than any past experience" in determining behavior and personality. "Given a changed situation, there is a changed role and consequently a changed personality." According to this school, human nature is so malleable that it will adapt "almost like a chameleon" to manipulated environment.

As test and proof of his hypotheses regarding history and psychology, Mr. Zinn offers testimony of his personal experiences in the Southern race crisis. No summer soldier in the Southern campaigns, he taught for seven years at a Negro college (Spelman) in Atlanta and took active part in sit-in and desegregation demonstrations there and at Albany, Georgia, and observed the movement in other states. As late as 1958 Atlanta was a tightly segregated city with an apparently solid white support behind the slogan, "Never." The change that followed was striking:

> By 1963: the busses had desegregated; so had the public libraries, the rail and bus terminals, a number of theaters and restaurants downtown, the department store cafeterias, the opera, the municipal auditorium, the legitimate theater, the public schools, the colleges (public and private), several hotels, the plainclothes squad of the Police Department, the Fire Department, the baseball team, the tennis courts, the parks, the golf courses, the public swimming pools, the Chamber of Commerce, several professional organizations, the county committee of the Democratic party and even the Senate of the Georgia General Assembly!

This was all done without violence in a city with 350,000 white people, the overwhelming majority of whom preferred a segregated society, who could have prevented most of the change "*if*

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*they had cared enough.*" The point is they did not care enough when it came to a showdown. They would have readily responded to yes-or-no questions of a public opinion pollster with a percentage of "no's" that would have made change appear hopeless. But a real-life situation is quite different from an abstract situation such as an opinion poll. In real life there were multiple choices, none of them perfect: riding an integrated bus or walking, and so with restaurants, parks, schools, etc. Or it might be as simple as a choice between creating a scene or passively submitting —with whatever grace and murderous emotional reservations. It is not the reservations or the emotions that are significant, we are told, but the behavior. And it is not personality or history that are the significant determinants of behavior, but the immediate circumstances, the expected "role." It is "the *situation,* rather than instinct or tradition," that is the key to the revolution, and the situation is "susceptible to manipulation." It is thus assumed that "in spite of the feelings of the Southern white, he can be induced to change his behavior, overnight," by skillful manipulation of sociological circumstances.

Our social engineer will take advantage of a number of human failings, now known as behavioral principles. One, already mentioned, is that "the public has a poor memory." Another is the individual's "need to conform to society at large." A third is "the need to meet the approval of a few people whose influence—consciously or unconsciously felt—is potent and continuous." A fourth is Mr. Zinn's own contribution growing out of personal experience, a doctrine heavily stressed and often repeated, that "the universal detergent for race prejudice is *contact*—massive, prolonged, equal, and intimate contact" between races.

Indiscriminate endorsement of this whole colorful assortment of psychological and sociological doctrines is asking a good deal. But one does not have to go that far to acknowledge the relevance of some of the insights provided. For one thing, they point up the fallacy in the pessimism founded on the opinion polls that register overwhelming percentages saying "Never," or the pessimism based on the solidarity of support for politicians dedicated to Massive Resistance. For another thing, they deal one more blow to the myth of incorrigible and immutable Southern folkways and their imperviousness to rational appeal and legislative action. The plain and demonstrable fact is that in the last few years, in response to judicial decision and legislative enactments, the South has changed. It has changed deeply, widely, and rapidly. It has not changed as much as many would like or as much as it must to comply with the law nor to live up to its own standards of justice. But it has changed. Southern whites and Southern Negroes and the relations between them have changed, and the changes are acknowledged and understood by both.

The analysis and theory of change and the technique of engineering it proposed by Mr. Zinn, however, are open to considerably more question. If change is to be accomplished at the cost of some sort of prefrontal lobotomy on society that blocks off the past irretrievably from the present, the cure may be worse than the malady. If change is only accomplished in contrived circumstances of the "immediate situation," upon individuals whose personality alters automatically with temporarily assigned "roles," the stability of the new order is in some doubt. The chameleon is, after all, proverbially adaptable. The situation may change again—"overnight"—and along with it our transmogrified white Southerner. And if all this is to be done by skilled social manipulation, one would wish to know a little more about the manipulator and his ultimate purposes. And one is reminded that the next manipulator may not be so benevolent in his purposes.

THE PANACEA of massive contact as "the universal detergent for race prejudice" also leaves something to be desired. In the first place, the hypothesis is embarrassed for want of illustrative examples. The one illustration Mr. Zinn offers was shortly to prove singularly unfortunate—"Harlem, or Bedford-Stuyvesant, at the fringes of all-Negro neighborhoods, where whites and Negroes live as cordial neighbors." In the second place, the hypothesis embodies a self-fulfilling prophesy. If the contact is indeed "massive, prolonged, equal, and intimate," the obstacle of race prejudice will necessarily have been removed as a precondition. The segregationist panacea was that strict separation of the races would produce racial harmony. This has been proved false. It does not follow, however, that the opposite hypothesis is necessarily true.

Little comfort is to be derived from the alleged success of the great 20th-century experiments in obliterating the past that have been conducted in Russia, Germany, and China. It remains to be seen how much of the past has actually been obliterated, and the long-range cost of the experiments is still to be reckoned. It is true that these experiments are pronounced "obnoxious" by Mr. Zinn, but he shows a disturbing willingness to learn from their techniques of burying or manipulating the past.

It is difficult to imagine where the civil rights movement and the Negro Revolution would be, or how they could be at all, without the past and without constant reference to the past. The white man is not the only Southerner with a history. The Negro is another American minority with a distinctive, un-American experience of history. And that experience has informed and colored every phase of the present movement and endowed it with its basic philosophy. Non-violence is not an invention of white intellectuals, or whites of any sort, nor was it borrowed from India. It was born out of the anguish of an encounter with the white

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man through the centuries of his greatest power and arrogance. It saw the Negro through slavery, Civil War, and Reconstruction, in all of which he rejected the bloody tactics urged by well-wishers. And his steadfast adherence to the wisdom of his historic experience explains in large part why he, and not the red Indian, is the center of attention today.

But there is more of the past in the present than philosophy. There are also the music and the rhythm and the words, the songs the people sing and the way they sing them and the meaning behind them, the unfathomable simplicity and the sly pun, the inexhaustible patience and the unflagging purpose, songs of King Jesus and the weary blues, the imagery and rhetoric of the speeches and the shouted response of the audience. To hear Mahalia Jackson sing, or Fannie Lou Hamer speak, or Martin Luther King preach is to be overwhelmed with the elemental impact of the past on the present. Cut these people off from the past and they would be struck mute.

There are, of course, other potent reminders of the past, the sort of past without which the savagery and brutality of Oxford and Birmingham and Selma are unimaginable. That is the Southern white past according to the historiography of Professor Mink Snopes and his patron, Ross Barnett. If that is accepted as the authentic reading of Southern history we really had better turn it all over to the sanitation department of the social engineers. Fortunately there are rival readings of Southern history that do not square with the Snopes version. They expose its sham, its hypocrisy, and its self-deception. The Southerner will find liberation instead of bondage in his true history. He will find in it persuasive evidence of the futility of erecting blockades against new ideas and attempting to stop the clock of history. He will recognize what obscene caricatures some of his present spokesmen have made of the best in his tradition. And he can gain some degree of immunity from the American myths of success and affluence and innocence and invincibility, which have little foundation in his own heritage.

There is no more use trying to persuade the white Southerner that he is a black man with a white skin than there is trying to persuade the Negro that he is a white man with a black skin—or trying to persuade both of them that they are undifferentiated and indistinguishable Americans with a slight accent. They are the oldest, the largest, and the most incorrigible of the hyphenate American minorities. "Negroes and white Southerners do, in fact, want to be Americans," as Robert Penn Warren remarks, "but by and large, they want to be themselves too; and the fact that both belong to minorities means that both may cling defensively to what they are, or what they take themselves to be. They may refuse to be totally devalued, gutted and scraped before being flung into the melting pot." There is, of course, a Southern counterpart of the transplanted Yankee who seeks to outdo the natives in being Southern—just as there is a white counterpart of the Negro who tries abjectly to be a white man. But none of these performances, however expert, really commands respect or encourages self-respect. And none of them rings true psychologically as a solution to problems of identity—racial, regional, or national. In each of them there is a large ingredient of self-hatred. And self-hatred is hardly the healthiest foundation for identity or the soundest foundation for the new order that is now struggling to be born in the South.

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## ASSIMILATION & THE SOCIOLOGISTS

### Marshall Sklare

THE QUESTION of Jewish assimilation has always been vexed by two different considerations: how willing was the general community to accept Jews fully, and how willing were Jews to deliver themselves up to the norms of the general community. Usually, though, one of the considerations has been tabled in order to focus attention on the other. Thus, during the first half of the 20th century, advocates of assimilation were likely to take the desire of Jews to plunge into the melting pot for granted and to concentrate on describing and removing the barriers of social custom and prejudice that stood in their way. In the past two decades or so, many of these barriers have fallen, leaving Jews a more open entry to the degree of assimilation they wish to achieve. As a result, those who believe that assimilation still lags behind its potential are likely to look to the resistance among Jews to explain the delay. In a recent lecture to the American Council for Judaism, Robert MacIver, one of the elder statesmen of American sociology and an occasional social adviser to American Jewry, emphasized that its lingering alienation from the American mainstream was a consequence not only of the traditional suspicions between Jews and Gentiles, but also of the persistence of what he calls "the training for minority-living in Jewish schools and homes." Such training MacIver identifies with the Saturday Sabbath, "the food taboos" and other "ritual ways and manners," the "taboo on intermarriage," and so forth.

MacIver's view represents an extreme version of a position that is becoming more evident among sociologists who specialize in intergroup relations. The most judicious and comprehensive statement of it is Milton Gordon's recent *As-*

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*similation in American Life.** A former student of MacIver's (the core of this book appeared as an essay in the MacIver *Festschrift*), Gordon occupies much the same ground that his mentor first staked out fifteen years ago: that is, he remains respectful of the claims of pluralism while being impatient with its consequences.

Gordon identifies seven distinct steps in the process by which a minority becomes fully assimilated into a "core" culture. The first step is the adoption of the manners and mores of the core society—in other words, what is usually referred to as "acculturation" by anthropologists and sociologists, though in Gordon's parlance it is called "cultural or behavioral assimilation." This is distinct from "structural assimilation": membership in the dominant clubs, cliques, and institutions of the core society. Other steps are "marital assimilation" (large-scale intermarriage), "identificational assimilation" (the loss of a sense of peoplehood and the adoption of the ethnic identity of the core society), "attitude receptional assimilation" (the erosion of prejudice), "behavior receptional assimilation" (the erosion of discrimination), and, finally, "civic assimilation" (the reduction of conflicts over values and power between the minority and the core society). However awkward in terminology, Gordon's theory does help us to estimate how far a particular minority group has to travel to reach complete assimilation. Moreover, his breakdown of the process enables us to compare and contrast assimilationist tendencies among the various minority groups in America.

ONCE HAVING established this very useful theoretical framework, Gordon moves onto a more practical and prescriptive analysis, much of which takes off from the discrepancy he finds between the rate of cultural assimilation (generally high, or at least moving rapidly) and that of structural assimilation (generally low, or at least moving sluggishly). In his view cultural assimilation is not the crucial mode of the process, for group life continues in America despite considerable adaptation to white Protestant norms. The crucial mode is structural assimilation; as soon as it takes place, all the other steps will follow. Freer access to the social preserves of white Protestant America inevitably leads to a stepped-up rate of intermarriage, and to the new loyalties and involvements that Gordon calls identificational assimilation.

Gordon fails to make clear, however, why structural assimilation has proceeded so slowly in the United States. The best he can do is the following suggestion:

> . . . A folk saying of the current day is that "It takes two to tango." To utilize the analogy, there is no good reason to believe that white Protestant America ever extended a firm and cordial invitation to its minorities to dance. Furthermore, the attitudes of the minority group members themselves on the matter have been divided and ambiguous.

But this analogy applies much better to the experience of the first generation than to that of the second and succeeding ones. Gordon regards the persistence of the minority communities beyond the immigrant stage as more or less a response to the prejudice and discrimination that were encountered in the majority society. Thus, even the second-generation American who took one or another of the paths toward assimilation was often forced to return

> . . . to the homelier but dependable comfort of the communal institutions of his ancestral group. There he found his fellows of the same generation who had never stirred from the home fires at all. Some of these had been too timid to stray; others were ethnic ideologists positively committed to the group's survival; still others had never really believed in the authenticity of the siren call or were simply too passive to do more than go along the familiar way; all could now join in the task that was well within the realm of the sociologically possible—the build-up of social institutions and organizations within the ethnic enclave. . . .

But has group life in America been founded mainly upon the loyalty of the rejected, the skeptical, and the unduly ethnocentric? Do prejudice, passivity, and ideology really explain why it has flourished? Gordon himself knows better, for at the beginning of his book he offers a different kind of description:

> . . . the sense of ethnicity has proven to be hardy. As though with a wily cunning of its own, as though there were some essential element in man's nature that demanded it—something that compelled him to merge his lonely individual identity in some ancestral group of fellows smaller by far than the whole human race, smaller often than the nation—the sense of ethnic belonging has survived. It has survived in various forms and with various names, but it has not perished, and twentieth-century urban man is closer to his stone-age ancestors than he knows.

Although Gordon tacitly recognizes, then, that the sources of group identity cannot be reduced to minority status, he does not systematically explore the other more basic, not to say more positive, motives for maintaining it. One reason for this omission possibly stems from the perspective which identifies modern-day group loyalties with the behavior of the "stone age"—a perspective which is, of course, connected with Gordon's own attitudes toward ethnic identity. To be sure, his feelings are complex: he is attracted to pluralism as much as he is repelled by it. When he analyzes the opposing theories of group life in America—notably "Anglo-conformity," the "melting pot," and "cultural pluralism"

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—he allows each to have its say and strives for balance and reconciliation. But whenever Gordon confronts the crucial question of whether American social policy should encourage pluralism or assimilation, his personal feelings inevitably condition the tone and bearing of the discussion.

Thus he says that ". . . cultural and structural pluralism in a moderate degree are not incompatible with American democratic ideas," and tries to work out a compromise position that would legitimate pluralism rather than either encourage or discourage it. But what is "pluralism in a moderate degree"? Gordon himself recognizes that to legitimate pluralism is by no means to insure the survival of group life; if anything, it makes the problem of providing for its survival that much more complex and delicate. In discussing the new setting of pluralism, however, his prescriptions of permissiveness and moderation frequently end in irritable criticism of the efforts of the minorities to maintain their distinctiveness. At one point, for example, he calls for ". . . careful consideration by those ethnic agencies, institutions, and officials . . . of the desirability of heightening the level of structural separatism now existing," citing their "capture" of the Boy Scouts (more than 50 per cent of all troops are today under sectarian sponsorship) as a significant instance:

> A generation or so ago, boys . . . who joined these organizations . . . were likely to find themselves participating in troops organized on an all-community basis (even when, in some cases, under Protestant church auspices) and thus to be thrown together with young people of faiths other than their own. In the mid 1930's . . . the Catholic Youth Organization accepted Scouting as a part of the Church's program . . . on the basis of arrangements under which sponsorship of local troops would be undertaken by Catholic institutions and such troops would be considered as reserved primarily for Catholic boys. . . . The Scouting organizations, anxious to spread the principles of their respective movements, have . . . acceded to arrangements of this type. There are now many Scouting groups sponsored by Protestant and Catholic Churches, and Jewish synagogues, as well as by YMCA's, YMHA's, parochial schools, Jewish community centers, and other sectarian groups.

Instead of harking back to an earlier and better age, a more disinterested observer might conceivably applaud a development which places Scouting before Anglo-conformity. And even one who esteems Scouting more than pluralism might still conclude that it is better to have Catholic and Jewish troops in a united Boy Scouts of America than separate scout movements for each religious and ethnic group.

Elsewhere, Gordon observes that "what keeps our groups in existence is that there is structural separatism in lieu of cultural separatism." Given this situation, if Gordon were a fully committed pluralist, his warning against structural separatism would naturally lead him to emphasize the need of the minorities to strengthen their cultural appeal in order to take up the slack in group ties. His failure to do so leads one even closer to the conclusion that while he accepts pluralism because it exists, because our ethnic and religious groups affirm its value, and because he believes they have a right to enjoy it, he himself regards pluralism as finally a primitive form of social organization which will wither away at a higher stage of social enlightenment. Thus in spite of Gordon's best intentions to be circumspect and generous, his personal predilections carry him almost imperceptibly toward the pole of full assimilation, or Anglo-conformity, though he would be among the first to recognize that the group consciousness and culture of the contemporary WASPs is in no way superior to those of minorities.

In sum, then, Gordon has enough faith in pluralism to accept it in the abstract but not enough to approve of the sectarian instrumentalities and values by which groups continue to maintain themselves. Moreover, he lacks the fuller understanding of pluralism which would enable him to grasp the broader reaches of its influence. Gordon focuses on the benefits pluralism confers on the minorities (freedom of expression and the freedom to develop a sub-community) and also on the significant role it can play in the development of individual personality, but he does not perceive how it benefits the society at large. That is to say, he does not see that pluralism provides a more desirable alternative to other forms of social organization, such as one rigidly stratified by class interests. Since Gordon himself is a student of social class, he might be expected to think of pluralism not only as a permissive acceptance of minority rights but as a force that creates a variety of non-economic interest groups, thus reducing the tendency of class to confront class and facilitating the diffusion, rather than the centralization, of power. To take Gordon's own example, it is much better for democratic society if a Scout Troop meets at a Catholic church than at a union hall, or at a recreational center owned by the corporation which employs the fathers of the boys, or as part of a "youth movement" conducted by a political party or by the government itself.

ALTHOUGH Gordon does not tell us explicitly how he feels about his own Jewish identity, *Assimilation in American Life* is suffused with the problem in its most characteristic form. In one passage—the most deeply felt in the book—Gordon speaks in behalf of the children of the ethnic enclaves who feel restricted by their group ties and who wish to move out into a realm of society where such ties are no longer binding:

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> . . . the individual, as he matures and reaches the age where rational decision is feasible, should be allowed to choose freely whether to remain within the boundaries of community created by his birthright ethnic group, to branch out into multiple interethnic contacts, or even to change affiliation to that of another ethnic group should he wish to do so as a result of religious conversion, intermarriage or simply private wish. . . .

While this appeal is couched in the language of the social scientist, it is clearly the Jew in Gordon that is speaking; the products of no other group in America feel compelled to defend the right to assimilate. An American Irishman who has lost his group identity does not need to justify his freedom of choice—he (or his descendants) merely cease being Irish. Nor, unlike Jewish assimilationists, do those who break away from the non-Jewish minorities ever appear to expect a release from feeling guilty about doing so. Gordon does:

> If . . . the ethnic group places such heavy pressures on its birthright members to stay confined to ethnic communality that the individual who consciously wishes to "branch out" or "move away" feels intimidated or subject to major feelings of personal guilt and therefore remains ethnically enclosed, or moves out but at considerable psychological cost, then we have . . . cultural democracy for groups but not for individuals.

What finally animates Gordon is that dream of a neutral society which has preoccupied many Jews since the Emancipation. The dream, of course, has taken many forms, depending upon the situation and passions of the dreamer. Gordon's version of it is modeled on the kind of "subsociety" of intellectuals that can be found in the modern academic community. Such a community brings "men and women . . . together because of an overriding common interest in ideas, the creative arts, and mutual professional concerns," and thereby serves as "the classic sociological enemy of ethnic parochialism."

Gordon would be less tolerant of pluralism did he not believe that a neutral society has at last emerged, that it is gaining strength and scope, and that ultimately all people who are not timid, ethnocentric, or psychologically maimed will seek membership in it. The shock troops of assimilation, according to Gordon, are the young intellectuals who no longer have to retreat from the dream as so many of their parents had to do in the previous generation. Although Gordon does not identify these young intellectuals, he must certainly—given the disproportionate percentage of Jewish college students—have his own group primarily in mind when he tells us that ". . . each ethnic group tends to lose, in any functional sense, a large percentage of its intellectually oriented young people to the newly formed subsociety composed of intellectuals." Moreover, the marked proclivity of young Jewish intellectuals in recent years to choose academic careers is due, in good part, to the yearning they share with Gordon for a neutral society. All of which is further evidence of Gordon's unconscious tendency to think about assimiliation in typically Jewish terms.

This tendency is also implicit in Gordon's analysis of the functions of the intellectual community. First, it provides a ". . . safety valve for those individuals who, because of widely ranging interests in ideas, the arts, and people find ethnic communality uncongenial." Secondly, it offers a congenial environment to the intermarried couples who require a neutral milieu because of their special situation. But most of all, it "serves the rest of the nation as a symbol of the possibility of inter-ethnic harmony and integration at the meaningful primary group level of communal living." It "provides a testing ground for the problems and processes inherent in the achievement of . . . [an integrated] society and stands as a symbol of its potential development in larger scope." Such eager claims and utopian hopes are not characteristic of members of a contented majority; they are the mark of an aspiring minority.

WHY IS IT that sociologists like Gordon and MacIver, who can so readily understand the attachment of people to their class, have so much difficulty in understanding their attachment to a religion, an ethnic group, or a race? Perhaps because sociologists are so secular, they cannot fathom why anyone should wish to preserve a religion. Perhaps because they are so attached to the urbanities of the academy, they cannot fathom why individuals of any sensibility could be satisfied with the parochial life of a minority and must attribute their loyalty to an ethnocentric ideology or to disabilities produced by social rejection, whether actually experienced or only imagined.

As I have said, Gordon brings more understanding to these complex matters than do most of his colleagues in this field. He is willing to abide a temporary pluralism, while he looks forward to the day when all men of good will can be enrolled in a kind of secularized *yeshivah*. Those like myself who believe they belong to a long and profound tradition rather than merely to an ethnocentric ideology will find Gordon's social eschatology singularly unattractive. However, the immediate questions which require research are whether a neutral society is indeed emerging in America rather than a more genuinely pluralistic one, and whether enough Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, whites and Negroes, bluebloods and new bloods, are willing to enter the brave new world that Gordon already finds in the academy. Judging from the recent literature on

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the bland conformity of the academic life, those on the inside have begun to have some doubts of their own.

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## POP GOES THE ISLAND

### Mordecai Richler

AFTER CHURCHILL died the British popular newspapers had themselves a sentimental orgy ("You can take tears today and catch them and call them the river that flows through London's heart. . . ."), but in spite of the treacle served up day after day the funeral was uncommonly moving. A nation seemed to be in mourning for itself. The honorary pallbearers were leading more than this hero to the grave. There was frail Attlee who had freed India and begun the job of dismantling an empire. Beside him stood Eden, who had fumbled Suez. Following after came Macmillan, shot down from office by a whore. The common fear, as V. S. Pritchett wrote in the *New Statesman,* was ". . . that we were seeing the end of our greatness with his; that meanness would now come in, that Churchill was the last and to the world outside we had become one more irrelevant folk culture."

Today's England belongs to Oblomov. Indecision is the rule; sloth, the style; and no day is complete without a burlesque. One day Miss Mandy Rice-Davies writes in *After Denning . . . The MANDY Report* (Confidential Publications Ltd., London), "To me Jack Profumo did not look bright enough to be in the Government and subsequent events have, I suppose, borne out this impression." Another day, C. P. Snow, now a Labour Minister and Lord Snow of Leicester, rises in the House of Lords to speak up boldly for a comprehensive school system; his own son, though, will not be mixing with the welfare state's nose-pickers: he's at Eton. "It is perfectly simple," Lord Snow said. "It seems to me that if one is living in a fairly prosperous home it is a mistake to educate one's child differently from those he knows socially."

Nothing, or almost nothing, works properly. It is notoriously easier, for instance, to get New York on the line than it is to make the right connection the first or even second time out on a local call in London. This year we've been lucky, but give us a winter of slightly more than average severity and electrical power fails, pipes burst, and railway points freeze. Meanwhile writers have become diagnosticians; bookshops, sickrooms. Look down the small table on which serious books are stacked and there lie the conflicting fever charts and readings of the weakening pulse of a nation.

While the British extremists, Left and Right, revile America, almost all innovation is latter-day American. On being chosen leader of the Labour party, Harold Wilson immediately modeled himself on President Kennedy. During the election he challenged Sir Alec Douglas-Home to a TV debate and promised a hundred days of action; his guide to campaign tactics was an assiduously studied copy of Theodore H. White's *The Making of the President, 1960* (which book, incidentally, has led to yet another variant on a proven American formula—*The Making of the Prime Minister* by Anthony Howard and Richard West). Wilson has also opted for culture. He has had his old friend Rupert Davies, television's Inspector Maigret, to Chequers for the weekend, and he has given Ted Willis a peerage. Lord Willis is best known for the hundreds of TV serial plays he has written. It's rather as if Kennedy, having struck a Medal of Freedom, had presented it not to Edmund Wilson but instead to the writers of *The Defenders.*

Even the English cultural uprising of the 50's had an American base. John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* owes a sizable debt to Tennessee Williams, while *Room at the Top,* by John Braine, is a carbon cousin of *An American Tragedy.* Arnold Wesker is *Reader's Digest* Odets. American-inspired enterprise is triumphant everywhere. Supermarkets are well on their way in and so is central heating, once considered too beastly for words. Cinemas where Ealing comedies used to play to S.R.O. audiences are being hastily converted into bowling alleys. Just three miles from where I live, in Surrey, a new motel is promised, incorporating a Wimpy Hamburger Bar and a Steak House. And in one of the truly competitive arenas in British life—journalism—all the aces are American. While it's true that *Topic,* a blatant copy of *Time,* folded a couple of years back, the magazine's young editor, Clive Irving, went on to adapt *Time*-style to the *Sunday Times* with such dash that his Insight pages are now widely copied in turn. Indeed today it is a wretched newspaper that is without its group-written Searchlight, Probe, Background, Depth, or Daylight page. And the *Sunday Times* pulled dangerously ahead of the *Observer* in a bitter circulation battle only after its canny proprietor, the Canadian Lord Thomson, unloaded yet another American fixture into Sunday journalism: the colored supplement.

More recently it was discovered that *Playboy* enjoys an enormous circulation here, and now we have had the first of several expected *Playboy* imitations. *King* is published, appropriately enough, by Paul Raymond, who also runs Raymond's Revue Bar, the first and still the most zingy of a spill of Soho clubs, with bunnies and all. Raymond introduced *King* with a publisher's letter: ". . . let me declare my philosophy right now: We like sex . . . our girls are laughing haystack-and-sunshine girls, not grimacing plastic mac-and-whiplash girls. . . ." The first issue includes a Malcolm Muggeridge

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conversation on espionage with Len Deighton, *King*'s Calendar Girl, Christine Keeler, in some nude moods, a piece on "How to Keep the Tradesmen at Bay" by the Earl of Arran ("Boofy" to his friends), who has "more titles than you can find in a public library," and an excerpt from *Candy* ("Sexual comedy is as old as mankind. . . . The marvelous thing about Terry Southern . . . is that he is a comic sex-writer of such literary excellence that he has forced public acknowledgement of the fact that masturbation, for example, properly regarded, doesn't seem to be a disgusting sin, but really rather a giggle").

TV, OF COURSE, is supremely American. The early texts for the "serious" British dramas were the plays of Paddy Chayefsky, Tad Mosel, and Rod Serling, and the best of the British plays, written by Clive Exton and Alun Owen, were unfailingly directed by Canadians, who brought New York TV technique with them to London. *Bonanza, Perry Mason,* and *The Dick Van Dyke Show* are all extremely popular here, and many of the so-called indigenous shows are based on American hits. Only *Highway Patrol* has led to a vastly superior British product: *Z-Cars*. But on a straightforward money level, the richest gusher in British TV history was *Robin Hood,* a show that was American-made by Hannah Weinstein and written and directed, for the most part, by blacklisted Americans working under pseudonyms.

Where Americans (who require work permits) are lacking, Canadians, some of them very gifted, are usually found to fill this office in British entertainment. Sometimes they fill it to the point of parody. The most powerful drama producer in British TV is Sydney Newman, a Canadian. When Newman arrived in 1958, he told reporters, "I'm just a crude colonial," and on the evidence offered they were more than prepared to believe him. Newman's rise has been swift and today he is responsible for all BBC TV drama, twelve hours weekly. He is worth speaking of if only because there are still innocents abroad who think BBC Third Programme standards apply to all of the BBC's output. The sour truth is that the BBC is as rating-conscious as the commercial networks here or in the U.S. Newman's own advice to "tired" writers is: "Cheer up, the world's an exciting place and changing overnight. Why not start out by finding a new and visually exciting place for a play to take place. . . . Don't worry about style. . . . Remember, a play is about people (the same as you and your audience) who demonstrate (it's visual, see?) their hopes, needs, ambitions (the play's driving force), but something (mother-in-law, a rival firm, the Russians, a character's ego) blocks their efforts (conflict) and they overcome it, or they don't. . . ."

American film expatriates also continue to have a considerable impact in England. The one with the most intellectual cachet is Joe Losey (*The Servant, King and Country,*) while Carl Foreman (*Guns of Navarone*), and C. Raker Endfield (*Zulu*) are both respected for their professional acumen. Years ago a blacklisted American producer who was stranded here said to me, "You've got an education, go to a library and find me something. Have you ever been in a library? It's a goddamn gold mine, if only you know which book to reach for. It's crazy." Since then, craftier Americans have been busy mining the ore. Cubby Broccoli and Albert Saltzman have been to the pithead and came back with the James Bond movies. When no British company would risk the capital necessary for *Tom Jones,* United Artists put up the stake. Even what the film critics here have called the first original indigenous British musical, *A Hard Day's Night,* was conceived by an American producer, Walter Shenson, and directed by a Canadian, Richard Lester.

Years ago most British radio comedy was written by men who huddled over short-wave sets with tape-recorders and picked up Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Fibber McGee, and other shows of the period. They then transposed and tarted-up the jokes and routines for British comedians. Radio no longer counts and most American TV shows reach England in their pristine form, but the tradition, far from dying, has now reached its finest flowering in Lionel Bart's musicals. Bart has borrowed heavily from Frank Loesser, Rodgers, Hart, Hammerstein, and just about everybody else. His latest musical, *Maggie May,* springs out of the American 30's as reflected by *West Side Story*. The book, by Alun Owen, tells the story of a whore-with-a-heart-of-gold and an idealistic docker. Son of a union martyr, young Casey returns to Merseyside after years in the navy to lead the dockers in a strike action against loading "black cargo"—guns that will be used to suppress native nationalists in the colonies. A corrupt union leader offers the dockers double pay to load the guns. They desert Casey, who decides to destroy the cargo. He dies, falling electrocuted from a crane, in the effort.

Bart's musicals are related to another phenomenon of British show business in the 50's: the astonishing rise of so many Jewish producers, promoters, writers, and performers—many of them, like Bart himself, directly out of London's East End enclave—to a virtually pre-eminent position. Looking back, I would say that the breakthrough came with Wolf Mankowitz's first novel, *Make Me An Offer,* which dealt with sharp practices in the antique trade. It added *schmaltz* to the new material of "The Angry Young Men" and "the kitchen sink" that was heralded by the Royal Court's production of *Look Back in Anger*. Mankowitz's novel was filmed, as was his less fresh, more maudlin *A Kid for Two Farthings*. Yet another Jewish film was made out of Mankowitz's adaptation of *The Bespoke Overcoat* which he set in the East End. Meanwhile, Oscar Lowenstein, initially a partner of Mankowitz, was on his way to becoming the

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most important producer of serious theater in the West End. Bernard Levin, the *Spectator*'s "Taper," began to blow Parliament down with ridicule (and though we hardly suspected it at the time, the new satire industry was founded). Bernard Kops abandoned his wheelbarrow of secondhand books and wrote *The Hamlet of Stepney Green*. This play, a mixture of fun and sentimentality, was far more reminiscent of old-fashioned Yiddish theater, and maybe a dash of Harry Golden, than of anything being done by young Jewish writers in America. The same can be said of Kops's most recent play, *Enter Solly Gold*. Still, British critics, especially the liberals among them, were unprepared. Irving Wardle wrote of *Enter Solly Gold* in the *Observer* (Oct. 14, 1962): "It is one of the best Jewish jokes of our time that since anti-Semitism is taboo to Gentiles it has become the rich monopoly of Jewish writers. . . ."

The producer of *Enter Solly Gold* was Arnold Wesker, who chose it to launch Centre 42, an experiment in developing working-class solidarity through refurbishing its folk culture. Given this aim, the choice of Wesker's play was particularly quixotic: a thoroughly Jewish comedy to introduce the bicycle workers of Nottingham and the sailors of Bristol to the power of "committed" theater. Meanwhile the (Jewish) culture that the masses don't walk out on is personified, unfortunately, by David Kossoff, a throwback to the ingratiating stage-Jew, who now has his own TV series, *A Little Big Business*.

NOTHING in the new wave of Anglo-Jewish pop culture, however, compares in interest to the real-life story of John Bloom. Bloom is a hero.

Born in Stepney, in 1931, the son of a Polish immigrant tailor, John Bloom sold chewing gum, comics, and fireworks to the other lads at school. "I was like the discount store," he told Margaret Laing of the *Sunday Times*, and to this his father added, "He'd do anything for a halfpenny." Bloom did poorly at school and left when he was sixteen years old, drifting from job to job. Then came military service in the RAF, where Bloom ran a cheap bus service for his mates. He was prosecuted at one point, but his case was dismissed by a judge who ruled, "It's no sin to make a profit." There followed other aimless jobs and *outré* projects such as a spray-on shoe polish that was supposed to last a week but split the shoe leather instead. In 1958 Bloom began selling washing machines door-to-door. He discovered a twin-tub machine in Holland, talked himself into the agency, and on September 24, 1958, risked 428 pounds on a back-page advertisement in the *Daily Mirror*. Bloom received some seven-thousand inquiries from housewives and immediately embarked on a massive direct-sell, price-cutting campaign that revolutionized a typically stuffy, inefficient British industry, outraged the City, and left the more solidly entrenched businessmen in ardent anticipation of his fall.

In 1960 Bloom acquired respectability of a sort by taking over Sir Charles Colston's Rolls Razor Co., and two years later he was a self-declared millionaire. "I shouldn't like to be poor again," he told Miss Laing, "and I have taken precautions to see that I shan't be." Still in his twenties, Bloom was photographed in restaurants wearing cufflinks shaped like washing-machines, and according to the gossip columns, he took round a different car each time he called for a girl friend. Recently, he recalled one of these cars as "the orange monster—a horrible flashy American bit of rubbish. I don't need special features any more."

By 1962 Bloom had a flat in Park Lane, owned a Rolls Royce "the color of a black tulip" and a 376-ton yacht, *Ariane*, that was usually docked at Monte Carlo. A year later Bloom was employing four-hundred salesmen, who worked entirely on commission, and spending two-million pounds on advertising (he was the largest single advertiser in the *Daily Mirror*). A portrait of him, done by Stephen Ward, hung in his office: a pale, young man, his little beard pathetically elegant. Over the bar in his flat was an illuminated mural of can-can dancers with glittering garters. There was also, in 1962, a scandal; the "Blue Gardenia" trial. "My wife knew all about the girl from the start," Bloom was to say afterward. Anne Bloom is twenty-five. "I like musicals and Doris Day," she told one reporter. "We keep a clean home and don't have milk after meat for hygienic reasons."

Last year Bloom tried to diversify. His offer to take over a football club was turned down disdainfully, as was his bid for the British-Lion Film Corporation. He did go into trading stamps, thereby becoming—as columnists snidely observed—the first person other than the Queen to have his face on a British stamp. Then the roof caved in. While Bloom was sailing his yacht in Bulgarian waters, arranging a tour deal (free trips with washing-machine purchases), his creditors pounced. Underfinanced, over-extended, trapped with a single product that was no longer selling nearly as well as his advertising required, the Bloom empire collapsed. Financial backing was withdrawn, receivers moved in, and more reputable voices in the City and industry and in the Anglo-Jewish community mourned his fall with thinly concealed glee. Wet-eyed widows and pensioners, interviewed on TV, told how they had lost everything by buying shares in Bloom's companies. The *New Statesman*, in a front-page sermon, said Bloom was the price of a Tory society (like Balzac, perhaps.) Bloom had to put the *Ariane* up for sale and to cancel his order for an executive airplane. He is said to have kept his private fortune intact (possibly eight-million pounds). He continues to hang onto the periphery of the show biz world, where his friends include Adam Faith and the Beatles. "I like the Beatles," he once said, "because I think I am on top of one sphere and they are on top of another. There are a lot of similarities."

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BLOOM's closer counterpart, though, is Brian Epstein, manager of Gerry and the Pacemakers, Billy J. Kramer, The Fourmost, Cilla Black, Tommy Quickly, and, of course, The Beatles.

A Liverpudlian, Epstein was born in 1934, which makes him three years younger than Bloom. The son of a middle-class family, he was expelled from Liverpool College, a minor public school, at the age of ten for being below standard. He writes in his recently published autobiography, *A Cellarful of Noise** that he was a late developer. "If Keats had waited as long as I did to get going he wouldn't have written more than a couple of poems before his death."

After Liverpool College, there followed a few more public schools, including Wrekin, which Epstein left at the age of sixteen in the hope of becoming a dress designer. Instead, his father put him in the family business, a furniture store. Then came military service ("Failing to be selected as an officer did not . . . prevent me from impersonating officers and one night this involved me in trouble"), and then the furniture store again. At night Epstein sought "escape in the cool and cultivated dusk of the front stalls of the Liverpool Playhouse." This led to enrollment in the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, but soon he "was yet again, face to face with failure." Epstein returned to the expanded family store, now set up in the Liverpool city center, and took over the record department, which he stocked with at least one copy of every available disc. Then one day in 1961 a boy named Jones stepped into the store and spoke the magic words. "Have you got a disc by the Beatles?" The Beatles? Seeking them out, Epstein went to the now legendary Cavern, birthplace of the Mersey sound, and before the year was out he was their manager. Two years later ". . . The Beatles were the greatest entertainers in the world. They had met the Queen Mother and the Duke of Edinburgh and their pictures were on the walls of all the noble bedrooms of the young aristocracy. Prince Charles had all their records and San Francisco had the ticker tape ready. Ringo Starr was asked to be president of London University and John Lennon was the world's best-selling writer."

Though the Beatles are now ubiquitous, it was their American triumph that saved them from sliding—and, in fact, propelled them to still more dizzying heights. Earlier, Billy J. Kramer and Cliff Richards had both failed the test. "The American charts," Epstein writes, "were unobtainable. Only Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, the very great in their field ever made any imprint. . . . Always America seemed too big, too vast, too remote, and too American. . . . We knew that America would make us or break us as world stars. In fact, she made us."

Is there anything left to say about the Beatles themselves? Possibly not. No daily newspaper is complete without its weather or Beatles report. Lennon and McCartney have formed a public company, Northern Songs, in association with Epstein and Dick James (the son of a kosher butcher, who used to sing the Robin Hood theme song). "McCartney and Lennon," James told reporters, "are going to be the Rodgers and Hammerstein of the future." Of course what distinguishes them from The Pretty Things, The Animals, The Kinks, The China Plates, The Headlines, The Rebel Rousers, and The Peddlers, is that they are talented. But are they *that* talented? Certainly not.

There are, of course, other considerations. For years on this island most pop entertainment has tended to be pseudo-American. After Marilyn Monroe there came, if only briefly, Diana Dors. Before Brando's *The Wild One* there were no ton-up (motorcycle) boys here. The Group Theater plus camp added up to frenetic Joan Littlewood's overrated company. *Mad* made for *Private Eye*. Ian Fleming was a special case. He was not so much public school Spillane as the obsolescent butler gone to work in Las Vegas.

IN RECENT YEARS, then, there have only been two original entertainment phenomena in England: the satirists and the Beatles. The satirists are preponderantly middle-class Oxbridge. At their height there was *Beyond the Fringe* and Michael Frayne's column in the *Guardian*, but today the satire is so thin and widely spread, so institutionalized and commercial, that in sum it is a bore. The Beatles, though, took on and beat the Americans at their own pop game. This is important. For many a British triumph in America (theater) or over Americans (boxing) is trivial or false. This country, for instance, should be able to send out the best Shakespearean actors. Boxing is something else. Almost monthly, American boxing bums are brought over here to feed the egos and ring ratings of such unlikely British hopefuls as Billy (Greek God) Walker and Henry Cooper. Most recently, Cooper, the British heavyweight champion, took on and beat a sleepy Jewish snowplow driver from Buffalo, named Wipperman, and Walker managed to knock out a Charlie Powell, who is a sparring partner in the U.S. But the Beatles, sir, took on the *Cashbox* "Top Ten" and won. Smashing.

If the Beatles, like Elvis Presley, had come from America, there would have been no British joy in their music or their nerve. The group would have been deplored as yet another example of bad taste Americana, etc., etc. But the Beatles came from gritty Liverpool and made it in New York. Golf, remember, comes from Scotland but the British Open is an American preserve. The first TV set was British-made. The jet engine was invented here, but BOAC flies American and so, very soon, will the RAF. This island can do with something socko. Anything socko.

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* Doubleday, 120 p., $2.95.

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MORDECAI RICHLER *is a Canadian writer living in England. His most recent novel is* Stick Your Neck Out.

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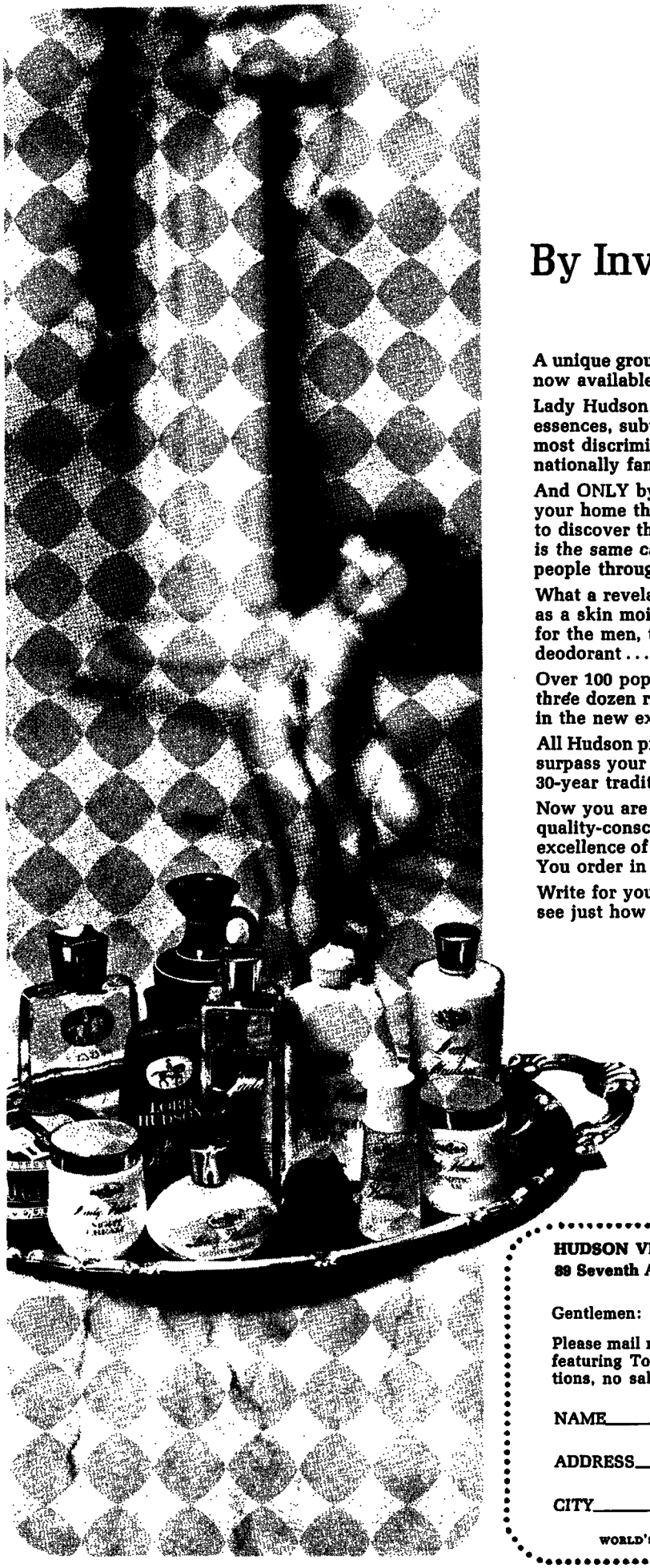

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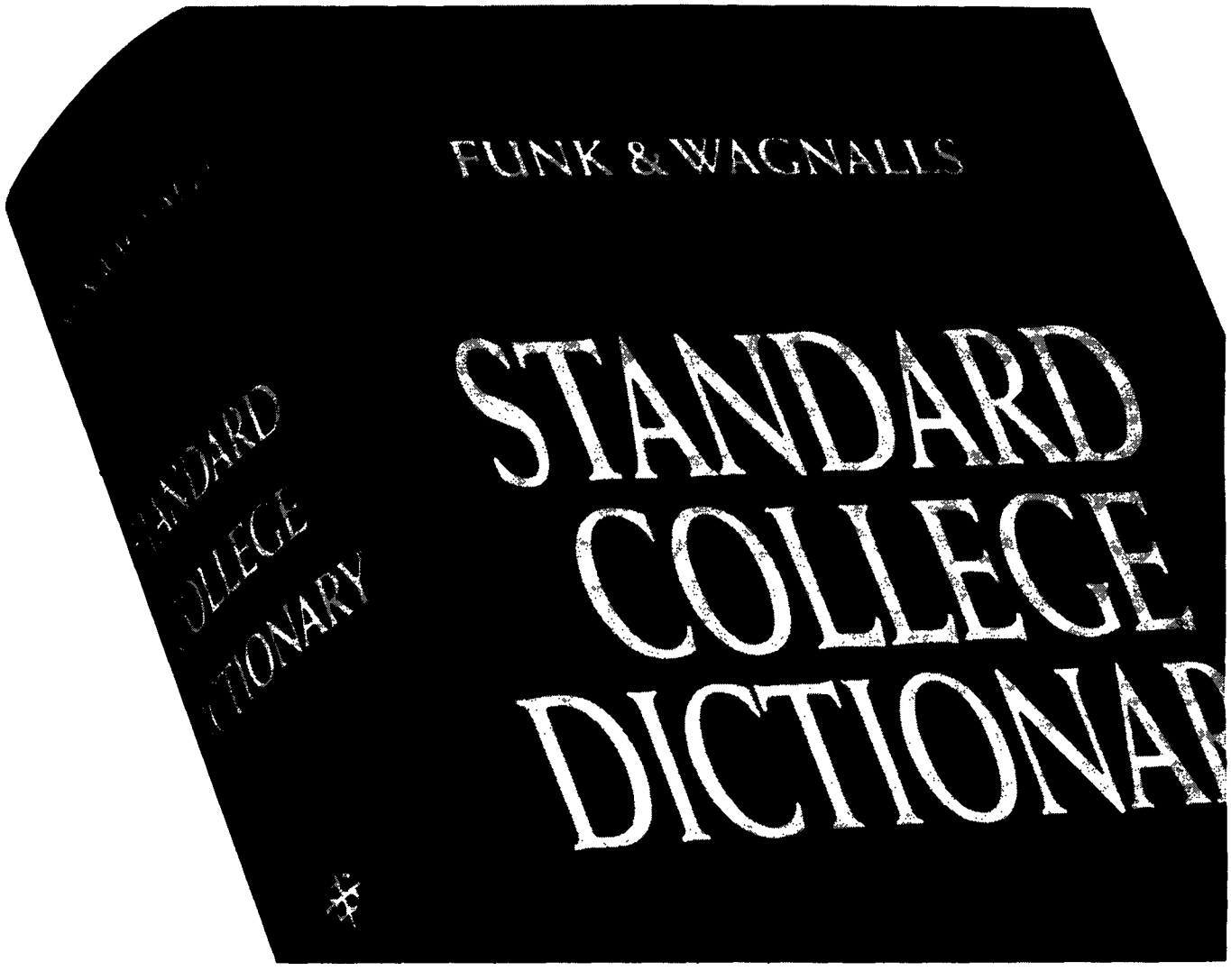


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## AMERICAN DREAMS

THE MACHINE IN THE GARDEN: TECHNOLOGY AND THE PASTORAL IDEAL IN AMERICA. By LEO MARX. *Oxford University Press. 392 pp. $6.75.*

*Reviewed by* NEIL COMPTON

DEARBORN, MICHIGAN contains two monuments to the genius of Henry Ford. One is the huge industrial complex that bears his name; the other is Greenfield Village, a lovingly idealized reconstruction of the kind of 19th-century small town that the automobile has rendered forever obsolete. This paradoxical juxtaposition is more than a rich man's foible: it is an emblem of two contradictory impulses that appear to be basic to American culture.

At first thought it may seem rather odd that the most highly industrialized nation in the world should be so devoted to nostalgic rural or "agrarian" values, but that it is so is undeniable: Norman Rockwell, blue-grass music, Robert Frost, Western movies, and Ernest Hemingway—not to mention both Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater—are evidence that such values are central to both what is best and what is worst in American culture. In recent years several scholars (notably Richard Hofstadter, Marvin Meyers, and Henry Nash Smith) have drawn attention to this phenomenon, especially in relation to the rise of obscurantist right-wing political movements. But Leo Marx's attractive and brilliant book is, I think, the first to relate the two phenomena systematically in an inclusive theory of American culture.

*The Machine in the Garden* is the kind of book that sustains one's faith in the vitality of contemporary American scholarship. So long as half-a-dozen works of this caliber are produced each year, we need not be unduly alarmed by the proliferation of academic journals teeming with unreadable and (one hopes) unread monographs. In his urbane and modest way, Mr. Marx demonstrates the speciousness of the alleged distinction between "historical" and "critical" scholarship: though his book is an important contribution to the social, political, and intellectual history of the United States, its argument is based almost entirely upon the close reading of a number of classic texts, both literary and non-literary.

Ever since Theocritus, pastoral has been an important element in the intellectual and artistic tradition of the West. It embodies the dream of an almost effortlessly fertile and harmonious relationship between man and nature. The mode has not always been popular with the critics: Dr. Johnson attacked the "easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting" pastoralism of Milton's *Lycidas,* and both the Romantics and the Georgian poets were roughly handled by contemporary reviewers. Freud classified the pastoral dream as a puerile fantasy stimulated by the instinctual privations of civilized life; and Ortega attacked those who, "unaware of the artificial, almost incredible character of civilization," accept material well-being as though it were "the spontaneous fruit of an Edenic tree"; Leslie Fiedler has interpreted the great American pastoral novels as expressions of a revulsion from full adult genital sexuality.

HOWEVER, pastoral can be more than a self-indulgent and regressive dream. It may serve as a valuable critique of the way things are: *The Beggar's Opera* (which Swift called "a Newgate pastoral"), *The Winter's Tale, The Return of the Native, Catcher in the Rye,* and even *Li'l Abner* can be said, in their different ways, to do this. Mr. Marx distinguishes between the popular, sentimental fantasy which he calls simple pastoral, and the imaginative and symbolic work of pastoral art which he calls complex.

The European tradition of complex pastoral as established by Virgil conjured up visions of a mythical, lush, green agricultural landscape populated by attractive and creative human beings. It was a dream of civilization, because the land has been improved and cultivated and its inhabitants are somewhat improbably well-bred. However this harmonious order is threatened not only by weeds, wolves, storms, and other natural predators, but also by civilization itself. Just beyond the green pastoral oasis, the world threatens and impinges: in Vergil's *First Eclogue* the shepherd Meliboeus has been evicted from his farm by an arbitrary act of the Roman government; Robin Hood enjoys Sherwood Forest at the price of continual vigilance against the Sheriff of Nottingham; Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* has been ruined by enclosure and industrialism. In such works, the pastoral idyll is a precarious one, almost inevitably doomed to extinction; it is generally set in the past and suffused with intimations of a legendary pre-historic Golden Age.

The discovery of America had a profound effect upon the pastoral imagination. Here was a green New World in the present, not just the memory of a hypothetical past. Was it a new Eden, inhabited by a guiltless race of "gentle, loving, and faithful" Indians (rather like pastoral shepherds), or a "hideous and desolate wilderness full of wild beasts and wild men," which demanded to be tamed, developed, and civilized? Mr. Marx shows that the answers given to this question often depended less upon evidence than they did upon the preconceptions of the witness. Ever since the 17th century, these contrasting viewpoints have confronted one another in America—often within the bosom of a single individual.

The belief that America is the



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incarnation of the pastoral ideal helps to explain why much early American literature is suffused with what D. H. Lawrence called "the spirit of place." That easy assumption of moral superiority and innocence which Europeans found so irritating arose from a conviction that the very soil of America is a kind of guarantee against the grosser vices. Crèvecoeur, as Mr. Marx shows, was so carried away by this rather literary idea that in the *Letters of an American Farmer* he forgot his own sophisticated education and upper-class family background, and wrote as though he were a simple husbandman, a product of the pastoral "middle landscape" and a golden mean between European over-refinement and frontier uncouthness. He may have been the first, but he was certainly not the last American author who claimed not merely to admire but to embody the pastoral ideal (one thinks of Faulkner in Oxford, Mississippi, refusing to meet critics and insisting, "I'm a writer, not a literary man").

But the pastoral existence has proved to be as precarious for Americans as it was for Meliboeus. The opening up of the country and the achievement of prosperity demanded that a free rein be given to the manipulative and acquisitive impulses encouraged by the rival image of the land as an undeveloped wilderness. Even Jefferson, whose private life and political principles were deeply imbued with pastoral values, had reluctantly to support industrialization though he knew it was destructive to the kind of smallholders' democracy that he favored. In the United States, the contemplative pastoral ideal has had no defenses against the fearsome dynamism of modern technology: from the earliest times, every American garden has been menaced by a machine.

Of course, this might be said of every country in the Western world, but in America the conflict has been particularly intense because of the absence of mediating institutions and traditions inherited from the pre-technological past. (As Henry James noted in *The American Scene,* one reason why the American landscape seems so poignantly and nostalgically Arcadian is that one is aware how vulnerable it is to forces which may disrupt its idyllic harmony.) The nakedness of this confrontation, says Mr. Marx, helps to explain the dialectical and contradictory quality which Lionel Trilling, Richard Chase, and others have detected at the heart of the American imagination.

AFTER A PERCEPTIVE chapter on "Shakespeare's American Play," *The Tempest,* as a prophetic dramatization of the cultural problems of a brave new world, Mr. Marx devotes most of his book to a number of 18th- and 19th-century writers ranging from Robert Beverley to Herman Melville, and from Daniel Webster to Henry Adams. After the 1840's, he finds the confrontation between machine and garden almost everywhere he looks. Hawthorne's notebook (27 July, 1844) describes a reverie inspired by a lush woodland clearing which is shattered by the shriek of a railway whistle; Emerson records a similar experience. Trains skirt the shore of Walden Pond, and clank through the woods in Faulkner's *The Bear;* in Frank Norris's *The Octopus* an express train crashes bloodily into a herd of sheep winding peacefully through a California valley. A steamboat smashes the raft and the mood of relaxed harmony between Huck and Jim on the Mississippi.

In each case, a period of almost ecstatic contemplation is ended by the intrusion of a machine. But though the writers recognize that the pastoral interlude has been purifying and regenerating, they also know that it is incomplete and inadequate to the full experience of reality in America. After his stay at Walden, Thoreau returned without regret to the city. Christopher Newman (in James's *The American*) may have been influenced by the first green leaves of a Long Island spring *not* to make his half-million dollars, but his next decision was to desert America for Europe. Even Huckleberry Finn, though he declined to settle for the kind of "civilization" represented by the Widow Douglas and Miss Watson, lit out for the new territory under no illusion that he would find there what he once knew on the great river.

These are personal and psychological resolutions, however. The authors do not try to reconcile the discordant elements in the American psyche: they merely dramatize them. Americans who insist on certainty about their national destiny usually have to settle for pseudo-solutions: they clothe technological reality in pastoral rhetoric, as Daniel Webster did (Mr. Marx does a neat job on him); they offer to end urban crime by the use of techniques appropriate to Abilene or Dodge City, as Barry Goldwater did; or, like the automobile manufacturers, they videotape new models amid the more spectacular bits of "unspoiled" American scenery. Meanwhile, as the USA becomes overwhelmingly urban and automated, the illusion of simple pastoralism ceases to be merely irrelevant and begins to be sinister.

Mr. Marx devotes his epilogue to *The Great Gatsby,* a profound fable of this tragic development. The action takes place on Long Island which, four hundred years after the first Europeans arrived there, still encourages the American dream, though the travelers come from the opposite direction and the valley of ashes is encroaching upon what was once "the fresh green breast of the new world." Oblivious to the brutality and vulgarity of his surroundings, Gatsby singlemindedly pursues the memory of a Daisy who may once have existed but does so no longer. As Fitzgerald says, his is the classic American error: "to mistake a temporary feeling for a lasting possibility." Those who, like Gatsby, still try to live in the pastoral garden, are in danger of developing his particular blend of sentimentality, criminality, and aggressiveness.

And there Mr. Marx leaves it. The trouble is, he says, that everywhere in the Western world "our inherited symbols of order and beauty have been divested of meaning." He does not blame this on the artists, who have faithfully dramatized the crisis of values. The problem now belongs ultimately "not to art but to politics."

No one can blame Mr. Marx

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for not carrying the discussion beyond this point: he has done his job by helping to clarify the discordant elements in the American dream. A reviewer in COMMENTARY, however, can hardly avoid asking some of the questions which such a conclusion implies. Is the liberalism which nurtured the pastoral dream just another episode in the history of self-deception? Is the retreat from society which is reflected in such contemporary genres as pop art and post-beat fiction a sign of the bankruptcy of American politics?

A few years ago, one might have been tempted to answer yes to both these questions. There is evidence, however, that a shift in values may be under way. What is needed is to replace the debased pastoralism of suburbia with an ideal of urban life such as inspired the builders of Siena, Urbino, or Amsterdam—and something like that may be happening. The largest American cities are probably beyond hope, but an extraordinary upsurge of civic spirit is transforming the centers of a dozen or more medium-sized communities; television, paperback books, and LP records are ending the old metropolitan cultural monopolies, and the Civil Rights movement is painfully restoring commitment and principle to urban politics. Perhaps such socio-cultural prophets as Ruskin, Giedion, and Mumford have not written in vain! There is even some hope that the promise of the Great Society may be more than a slogan. No one knows, however, whether these developments represent a genuine change of consciousness or merely a shift in the surface arrangements. And there is always the fear that what is being done is a matter of too little, too late.

## PROVISIONAL ABSOLUTES

PRINCIPLES OF THE JEWISH FAITH. By LOUIS JACOBS. *Basic Books. 467 pp. $9.50.*

*Reviewed by* CHAIM POTOK

RABBI LOUIS JACOBS is troubled by the "obstacles to belief in some of the classic expressions of the Jewish Creed in those areas where *facts* about the universe, presented by new knowledge, contradict some of the older formulations." He is convinced that the acceptance of religious doctrines in the face of such evidence constitutes a sacrifice of intellectual integrity which Judaism does not demand. This candid admission has brought down upon his head the wrath of English Jewry's fundamentalists, but it has also won him the enthusiastic support of progressives who are weary of a Judaism they consider to be unduly influenced by the ghetto tradition of Eastern Europe.

In this book Rabbi Jacobs attempts to spell out what a modern Jew can believe in terms of the thirteen principles of faith formulated by Maimonides in the 12th century. Briefly, these principles are: belief in the existence of God; in God's unity; in God's incorporeality; belief that God is eternal; that God alone is to be worshipped; belief in prophecy; in Moses as the greatest of the prophets; belief that the Torah was given by God to Moses; that the Torah is immutable; that God knows the thoughts and deeds of men; that God rewards and punishes; belief in the advent of the Messiah; in the resurrection of the dead. Rabbi Jacobs devotes a separate chapter to each of these doctrines. His method consists of first stating the doctrine, then presenting the treatment accorded to it by the more significant Jewish theologians throughout the ages, as well as by pertinent Christian, Moslem, and secular thinkers. After evaluating these various points of view, Rabbi Jacobs states his own position. His fine scholarship produces a vivid confrontation with the wide spectrum of thought that has characterized Judaism in the past.

A good history of theology, however, does not in itself constitute a theology. As a creative enterprise, theology is not so much born out of scholarship as out of insight into the tension between old doctrines and new realities. The value of a theology depends upon the depth of this insight and the originality of its proposals for resolving that tension. Measured by these criteria, Rabbi Jacobs's work reveals an archaic quality, which is, I think, a sign of his failure to deal with the genuinely significant issues.

TWO ASPECTS of the work are particularly disconcerting. One concerns the author's methodology. Rabbi Jacobs makes reason the test by which he judges the relevance of the Maimonidean principles for the 20th century; however, he seems to make up the rules of what is reasonable as he goes along, or at least to shift arbitrarily back and forth among various kinds of reason. For example, after admitting that the three classical proofs of God's existence have no demonstrative power, Rabbi Jacobs goes on to argue that they are nevertheless valuable as "indications" of God's existence. He thus abandons formal reason in favor of rhetorical utility. At other times he seems to appeal to aesthetic "reasons," as when he rejects the naturalist position simply because it "fails to satisfy the religious mind." And sometimes he is capable of abandoning reason altogether in favor of the very faith he is supposedly judging by means of it. Thus he dismisses Samuel Alexander's concept of emergent Deity because "it is emphatically not the view of Judaism and its rejection is implied in the fourth article of faith we are considering." That is hardly a fair way to play the game.

The second disconcerting aspect of this work is Rabbi Jacobs's persistent sidestepping of major issues. In his presentation and defense of the first five Maimonidean principles, for instance, he completely overlooks the focal point of contemporary theological tension. Theology today is confronted with the spectacle of a thousand years of effort that has produced not a single argument that will convince anyone of the existence and nature of God who is not already convinced. What are the implications of this failure and can anything whatsoever be rescued from it? What kind of logical tools, if any, can be utilized by the theologian today? Or is all religious thought to be relegated to the realm of the non-cognitive? When Rabbi Jacobs discusses the damage inflicted on the religious world-view by Darwinism and argues that "the sur-

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vival of the fittest is itself evidence of a plan and order and there can be no plan without a mind in which it is conceived," he ignores the main challenge posed by modern thought. For any argument from design to Designer is immediately open to questions concerning the nature of the Designer. It is not an answer but the postponement of an answer; to answer one mystery with another mystery is a most mysterious procedure indeed. Can anything at all be said about the Ultimate Mystery? What is it about this Ultimate Mystery that satisfies the religionist's quest for meaning? Why is it that the religionist always finds allusions to this Mystery in the reality around him? Is he responding to some psychological, rational, emotive, or aesthetic need inside himself that the secularist does not share? And assuming that a need is involved, how does he make the jump from need to ontological reality? These questions are far more fundamental than the question of whether we can or cannot believe the various doctrinal statements of Maimonides, for they undercut the very basis of *all* doctrinal statements. Yet Rabbi Jacobs has very little to say about the issues they pose.

His preoccupation with old problems is well illustrated by his treatment of Maimonides's eighth principle, which asserts the fundamentalist position that the Torah was dictated by God to Moses and that all of it is of divine origin. Rabbi Jacobs emphatically rejects this version of revelation on the grounds that the incontrovertible evidence of archaeology, anthropology, and Bible criticism is opposed to it. He explains his own concept of revelation as follows:

> Revelation . . . is not the communication of *words* to man, not a divine dictation to a passive human recipient, but a meeting of God and man in history, a meeting producing results of eternal significance. . . . That the record is humanly mediated, that it is colored by its human background and the minds of its human authors, that it contains error as well as truth, does not affect its claim, or the claim made for it in Jewish tradition, to contain the word of God. We must stress the word "contain" for the new view of revelation—of "Torah from heaven"—is that it is *contained* in the Bible, not that the Bible itself is revelation. The words are human, they have a history, there are contradictions and discrepancies in them . . . but, for all that, in this collection of books, as in no other, the account is there for all to read how man found God and how God helped man to find him.

Such a position has grave implications for the status of the Biblical commandments and the oral law. How can laws conditioned in and by time serve as divine commands that possess eternal validity? Rabbi Jacobs replies to this question by adopting the Middle Way approach of Zechariah Frankel, the 19th-century founder of Historical Judaism:

> . . . the *mitzwoth* are divine commandments for me because they have come to be such through the long history of my people and because they speak to my own situation as a human being in need of God. I keep the Sabbath, irrespective of its origins, because it is a fundamental religious institution of my people, as a people dedicated to God's service, because of the wealth of meaning the prophets and the poets, the saints and the sages of Israel, have read into it, and because my personal religious life is enriched immeasurably by the weekly reminder that God is my Maker and Creator of all there is.

That may answer the question but it also entails new problems. In the first place, any non-fundamentalist interpretation of revelation necessarily makes it impossible to determine which commandment is grounded in God and which is not. Accordingly, the non-fundamentalist who still adheres to *Halakhah* must have recourse to expressions like "the long history of my people," "a fundamental religious institution of my people," "my personal religious life is enriched immeasurably," in order to explain his religious behavior. When such expressions have no mooring in direct revelation, however, they are by nature subjective; they are grounded in one's own concepts of God, Torah, and the peoplehood of Israel—that is to say, in a personal sense of loyalty to one's culture and traditions.


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It is at this point that the real implications of Rabbi Jacobs's Middle Way become all too clear. For what has happened is that we have suddenly entered into the realm of personal aesthetics, the realm where one chooses a pattern of observance on the basis of one's personal tastes. Precisely the same thing holds true in the matter of creed. On Rabbi Jacobs's own terms, one can make out a good case for the claim that principles of faith are basic religio-aesthetic constructs of the universe through which reality is filtered and reshaped. When the religious mind begins to boggle at a traditionally accepted principle, the latter is cast aside and another takes its place. These constructs are as varied as are human beings: Job's religious model of the universe is not the same as that of Ecclesiastes. And there are no *eternal* absolutes by which to judge the ultimate validity of these constructs; at best there are only *provisional* absolutes, which constantly shift as the religious perspective of individuals changes.

THESE implications raise difficult questions. Can an enlightened religious position, one that gropes for an understanding of man and the universe, anchor itself in the quicksilver of provisional ultimates? How can this anchoring be accomplished in a manner that will not violate the canons of rationality? Or should one admit once and for all that the only answer possible is the anti-rationalism of Kierkegaard and Barth?

The Middle Way may well be the only alternative open to the intelligent modern Jew who is repelled by fundamentalism and yet feels a powerful attraction to Jewish doctrine and law. But the acceptance of this position entails the responsibility of coping with its implications and it is this responsibility which Rabbi Jacobs fails to meet adequately.

Furthermore, he does not recognize the great extent to which the whole fabric of Jewish doctrine is held together by the thread of fundamentalist revelation. Rabbi Jacobs is correct in removing that thread, but he will not admit that he thereby begins to unravel the

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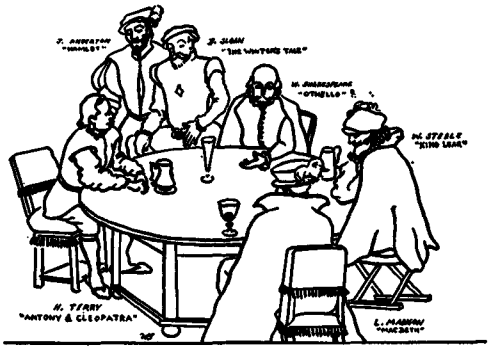
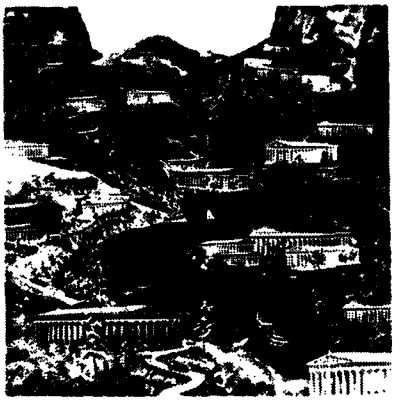
# You Can Never Understand Art Until You Face These Three Truths

**1** It's the accident of what men possessing what talents arrive on earth in what quantities and at what times that usually decides which art works are considered "great," and not the qualities in the art works themselves. A sudden surge of "Type A" men, all possessing a special skill in creating (or in understanding) Type A art, will soon reduce that type of art to mediocrity no matter how superior it had previously been considered.



**2** Imagine that Shakespeare's plays had been written by a number of men (as suggested above) instead of by only one. All the plays' "eternally great qualities" would still be there, would they not? And yet, simply because your estimate of *how difficult it was to create them* had been reduced, your estimate of their greatness would be proportionately reduced. What's difficult to do today may be easy tomorrow.



**3** Too many Parthenons. As soon as you admit that an art work can continue being "immortal" only if *certain things don't happen* (such as its being on top of hills everywhere) you are admitting, in effect, that it is not really immortal at all. What counts is its speed of tiring, and how much tiring pressure will be brought against it.

## "Art Is Too Important To Kid Yourself About"

**IT ISN'T IMMORTAL,** no matter how insistently old-fashioned critics go on telling you it is. Too many unexpected things can happen in this world to justify positive verdicts such as those quoted below (all by famous critics, names on request). However the mere wrongness of the verdicts (though bad enough) is not what does the most harm. Much worse is the fact that they confuse and frustrate those great masses of the people, who, on finding that they are totally unable to respond in the way they inevitably "should," conclude that there is something artistically lacking in themselves, and that they are therefore permanently excluded from art. Don't let yourself be bluffed that way. There's no one best road to take. Men come in an infinite variety of temperaments; and they move ahead by outgrowing art, at higher and higher levels (and the sooner the better) not by stagnating inside it.

This does not mean that you deny that experts may know more about art than you do. It means that you deny them the right to use that knowledge to brainwash you instead of to instruct you.

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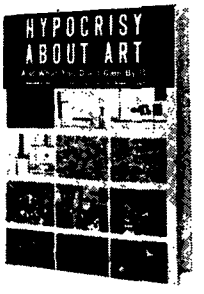


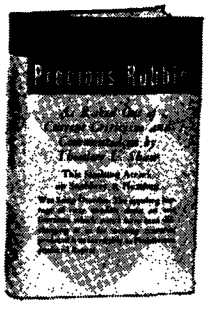


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entire fabric. In the closing section of the book he tries to distinguish between traditional beliefs which can and cannot be contradicted by new knowledge, but this is a futile enterprise, for there are no objective standards by which such a distinction can be made. For example, to say that God's goodness is a traditional belief which cannot be contradicted by new facts, while the Mosaic authorship of the Bible can be so contradicted—because the former supplies us with information about the meaning of life, whereas the latter is based on traditional opinions about the facts of the material universe—is to play a bizarre game with words. Are principles about the meaning of human life never to be tested against the *facts* of reality? And, conversely, is the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch merely a belief based on traditional opinions about a fact of the material universe? Isn't the assertion of fundamentalist revelation the unequivocal guarantee that God has invested all of reality with *meaning*?

Indeed, it is because the entire fabric of belief is imperiled that those who are still deeply committed to Judaism, and at the same time are aware of the radical challenge of modernism, undergo the difficulties of rethinking their positions. The results are evident in the wide spectrum of thought that characterizes contemporary philosophies of Judaism. Rabbi Jacobs's work takes its place as one more statement within that spectrum, but it is an inconsistent and antiquated statement, for he is not yet willing to investigate the full implications of his position.

Along with its scholarly discussion of classical Jewish theology, the value of his book comes from its honest groping for an alternative to fundamentalism. Rabbi Jacobs's efforts mark the beginning of English Jewry's encounter with modern thought. At the same time, however, they clearly indicate the extent of the cultural gap that exists between American and English Jewry. Thus, the most refreshing element in the book is Rabbi Jacobs's recognition of the validity of modern biblical criticism, though this has been taken for granted by Jewish theologians in America for many years now. Rabbi Jacobs himself suggests that much of what is presented in this book may not be original. One hopes that his future writings will help to bring Anglo-Jewish thought more abreast of the issues with which contemporary theologians must inevitably wrestle.

## STRANDED IN THE FUTURE

NEW YORK PROCLAIMED. By V. S. PRITCHETT. *Harcourt, Brace & World. 116 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by JASON EPSTEIN

THE QUALITIES which so greatly distinguish V. S. Pritchett as a literary critic—his reasonableness, his fine sense of the concrete and the relevant, the restraint with which he calls upon his passions, his wit, his indefatigable bookishness—seem, in the case of his new book on New York, rather to embarrass him. One feels that New York in its unbearable disarray, its metaphysical confusion and at the same time its ineffable abstractness—a vortex of noise and taxi-cabs expressing itself, nevertheless, as a fine theological proposition—is too much for Pritchett's special sensibilities, enough almost for him to abandon those virtues and sane perspectives through which he habitually and wisely views the world. There is something cruel in this confrontation of author and subject so that one wants, occasionally, to turn away from *New York Proclaimed*, as in a nightmare one might turn from the sight of Dr. Johnson riding on the subway.

This is not to say that Pritchett finds New York hateful or even, much of the time, uncongenial, much less that it exceeds his grasp. Rather he loves it and knows it in the way that devoted and sensitive travelers—and Pritchett is pre-eminently one of these—always love their subjects; as mountaineers must love Everest no matter how disagreeable such heights might seem to ordinary people. At times, indeed, in *New York Proclaimed* when Pritchett describes Manhattan in February he might as well be talking about some frosty peak

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where "the terrible cold drills into the chest and blinds the eyes in winter" or on another occasion he might be in the rain forest where "the extreme summer heat . . . burns one's face off, the furnace blast; or the damp heat that suggests you are walking through hot wool or have been sat on by an elephant."

Nor is Pritchett's affection for his subject diminished by its "hatred" of the past or its passion for turning everything into money, including not only the real estate, but the people themselves who flow into their buildings each morning "like cash." His forbearance extends even to the Calvinism of New York's intellectuals, to their "love of that particular conundrum in which the strongest sense of a historical damnation starts with Oedipus and runs into such matters as the massacre of the Indians and the various racial guilts, and ends inextricably tangled with the sense of being of the Elect."

This love for New York that sustains Pritchett through the various agonies which the city visits on him is obviously genuine and genuinely sentimental: "In winter," he recalls as he contemplates the wake of the British ship that is carrying him home, "you had seen the skaters at Rockefeller Plaza and in the park; they were there it seemed skating on champagne. In the spring or autumn you had walked feeling your veins and arteries were alight. The traffic seemed to have carpets under its wheels." Pritchett survives all the obvious pains and distractions and he succeeds in knowing New York in better detail and more intimately than many of its resident writers.

Even so, the note of terror in this book is inescapable. It shows itself at times even in the rhythms of the prose which, uncharacteristically for Pritchett, become now and then hasty and guarded, the prose of a man hurrying home at night along hostile avenues, sensing danger in dimly lit streets. For New York—and Pritchett in his shrewdness and sanity has clearly grasped this—is to any reasonable mind an impossibility, a squared circle, a set of intersecting parallel lines. By every law of Euclid it cannot be said to exist. It is too active, too unstable to be a city. Yet obviously it does exist, consuming and creating itself within a single gesture, endlessly, a palpable phantom, a phantasmagoria in which one comes eventually to feel at home, unfit to live anywhere else. The pressure which such an anomaly exerts on a mind so disillusioned and so craftsmanlike as Pritchett's must be very hard to bear, and from time to time in this book one hears a stifled cry of pain.

> The museum at the Cloisters is beautifully contrived, but when you look from its terrace to the world outside there is a shock. Inside in those fragments of an art there is reality, the fruit of man's life considered beneficently as a tragedy. Outside there is mere actuality. It is a place where one feels—as so often in New York—stranded in the future.

No wonder then that of all the writers who have confronted New York the only one whose vision seems (so far) impervious to time and change is Kafka in his novel *Amerika*: Kafka who never saw New York at all but who anticipated it, down to the Saw Mill River Parkway, from his habitual perch out there in the future. The London of Mayhew and Dickens, of Trollope and Conrad persists, echoing back and forth from one generation of writers and travelers to another, as does the Paris of Balzac and Proust or even Sartre or the Petrograd and Moscow of Dostoevski and Pasternak. But New York as a literary subject is transient and fragmentary. The New York of Washington Irving is gone without a trace. The New York of Henry James and Edith Wharton survives only in an antiquarian sense or as a delusion. The bridges and fountains and hotels of Hart Crane or Fitzgerald or Wolfe may still stand, but one sees them as faded prints, pedantic or nostalgic footnotes. With dismay one reflects that even the hotels and brokers' offices of Bellow's *Seize the Day* are now becoming flophouses for junkies or parking lots. The literary imagination can claim no permanent conquests in this city. Time runs through it like a river in flood. There is no place to stand except perhaps high up in the Cloisters with the past at one's back and oneself stranded like Tantalus,


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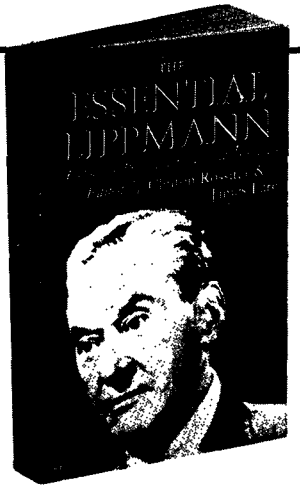


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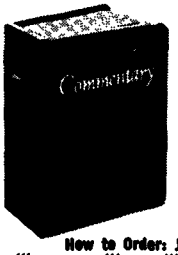


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grasping at the present always out of reach.

WHAT PRITCHETT GIVES us, then, is not so much a portrait of New York and certainly not a guidebook but a confrontation and an adventure, a tale of the literary mind at bay, the writing man in extremis. Typically he begins with the history, with Henry Hudson who, in the first lines of *New York Proclaimed,* is remembered to have been attacked by his crew and left to freeze in the Arctic, a foreigner, an Englishman amidst the Dutch: his "kind of foreignness was basic to the city from the beginning." But the history, one soon discovers, fails to supply the bearings one wants. Those Dutchmen with their clay pipes, the brawling English sailors, the Tories on their farms, brave George Washington, have nothing to do with the present, as generations of bored and alienated schoolchildren, who have had to suffer these legends, attest. In, nevertheless, trying to connect New York's past to its present, Pritchett makes an uncharacteristic error of fact: "Except for the huge apartment houses for the mass population in Harlem or the Lower East Side, I would guess New York is far more solidly built than it used to be a hundred years ago." Impossible: hardly anything in human history can have been less solidly built than the new buildings that already crumble and tilt, creaking and groaning along Park Avenue, or the new hotels that are really tents made of glass: let there be a depression, a sharp rise in lending rates, a bombardment, a window washer's strike, a considerable hailstorm, and those buildings, within a week, will be uninhabitable. Pritchett's mistake, one suspects, is wilful, an author's attempt to give some substance or dignity to the present, if only to justify or palliate the pain and exertion that must have gone into writing such a book as this. The fact is that nothing in New York can be built to withstand the wrecker's ball because the essence of everything in New York, as Pritchett observes elsewhere in this book, is money, no matter what the outward forms may be. The most stable buildings in town are not the great limestone terminals or the mansions along the Park, but the slums in Harlem and they will remain that way as long as they go on making a profit. The true history of New York will have to be written by a Certified Public Accountant. From the other kinds of history, one learns almost nothing except the one fact: the cataclysmic power of the rate of return on invested capital. Hiroshima never knew its equal.

Pritchett, however, is no accountant, nor even much of a Marxist. If we prefer to tear up our houses for the sake of imprinted pieces of paper, why should this literary traveler be indignant? The Chinese or the Ashanti in their ways are no less peculiar or silly. Still, the history in this book doesn't work, seems irrelevant and perfunctory, an insufficiently substantial metaphor. Inevitably, the mind turns to other tropes. But these are more hazardous still, and Pritchett criticizes Henry James "for splashing about in metaphor," though no more extravagantly "than all who have followed him"; including, of course, Pritchett himself who, having just admonished the master, goes on to describe the buildings as "tall fungi," a "petrified forest"; the skyscrapers are changing places, as one's ship comes up the river, in a "millionaire's waltz" and one's own ship finally comes to rest and moors next to "the greatest liner of all."

But if history doesn't help, poetry doesn't help either. Manhattan is not an ocean liner, millions of people spend their lives here and hardly know which way the ocean lies. Nor is it anything like a waltz. Anthropology or natural history work somewhat better. Here is Pritchett, the white hunter, just returned from the bush explaining how the natives live and die:

> The Village is reborn in every generation. In any year one may see the quintessential couple, rather more domesticated than in the past: he, tall and gangling in check shirt, jeans and sandals, with a sort of net haversack on his back containing a baby. An unsmiling youth, he is followed by his plain, unsmiling squaw, a stroller containing books, two more unsmiling children, and some groceries. They are the rebellion, the quarrel with society in person. They are moving

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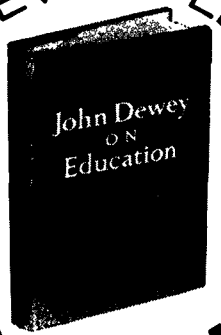


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towards their room and a half, their typewriter, their Fulbright, and their divorce. It is rather touching.

But autobiography works best of all, and when Pritchett recalls himself as a younger man reading on the subway or living in the Village where he heard Stefansson talk about the Arctic or wondering what has happened to that Swedish girl who was working on "Rhythm in the Prose of Marcel Proust," one gets a sense not only of a certain young English writer living in a definite way on a particular Village street but of the city itself, no longer a phantasmagoria without a proper history or an impossible poem or an environment not quite appropriate to human life, but of a place so beguilingly romantic and yet so concrete that Pritchett can think of "no other city, except Paris, where the inhabitants are so self-consciously at one with the dominant assumptions of the place. . . ." Though it is a cliché, it must be repeated: New York is a state of mind or feeling.

PRITCHETT IS at his best and happiest when he writes about Harlem. "If Activity is the principle of New York life, here reigns the opposite. It is not Indolence but Being. Quite simply, people *live* here. They pass the time." It reminds him a little of Southern Europe. "The little shops are packed. Men sit against the walls playing dominoes. The hundreds of barbers sleep in their chairs, or stand still, looking like big black flies that have settled, stupefied by their lack of customers." In Harlem Pritchett is closer to home than anywhere else in New York, which means, among other things—among *many* other things—that he is pleased to be rid of the mad Calvinist cash machine that flings people to and fro downtown, shredding their streets and houses. "The Negro adds a shadow of eighteenth-century magnificence to New York . . . [he] brings to the streets a note that is sometimes aristocratic and the sense of older times. He also brings laughter which is not very common in a very serious city. . . . I am not saying he is simply picturesque. I am saying he brings a presence and even a pleasant pedantry." Out of context and in view of The Problem this must sound a little patronizing or cynical, like the account quoted above of the Villagers, wheeling their books and children toward oblivion. The opposite is true. "It is," he says, "simply that the poorer classes in all countries retain for a long time the culture that the better-off have discarded. The New York Negro retains some of the past that New Yorkers have lost. The forbearance of the Negro may be the forbearance the white man once had when his life was really domestic and pervaded by the old and now forgotten disciplines of family life. It may be no more innate than it has turned out to be in the modern white man. What one is saying is platitudinous: the African one meets in Europe is African; the Negro of America is as American as any of the characters in the novels of, say, Howells or Hemingway." Which is more, one suspects, than Pritchett might be willing to say of the Americans he meets or sees in the rest of New York.

A word on the photographs by Evelyn Hofer: these are often brilliant in themselves and one, of a young Negro astride his bike under the Queens Bridge, is extraordinary: a portrait worthy of Malvina Hoffman. The pictures are neither strident nor chic nor sentimental. Yet it must be said that New York is probably harder to photograph than to write about. In these photographs one neither recognizes one's familiar city nor discovers a new one, though one is, nonetheless, constantly aware that Miss Hofer is an elegant and discriminating artist.

## "HIGH-IRISH"

THE FOUNDING FATHER: THE STORY OF JOSEPH P. KENNEDY. By RICHARD J. WHALEN. *New American Library. 560 pp. $6.95.*

*Reviewed by* THOMAS F. CURLEY

THE CURLEY CROWD and the Fitzgerald-Kennedy clan never did get along. Political rivalry accounts only partly for this. In the course of the rivalry, Honey Fitz developed a "high-Irish" tone that the roughneck Curleys never could swallow. When in 1914, Fitzger-

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ald's daughter, Rose, married Joseph Kennedy, a Harvard graduate and a banker, the distance between the crowd and the clan widened. Despite the jealousies and enmities, Honey Fitz was a genuine politician; not much of an infighter, to be sure, and never honorable enough to go to jail, but a "pol," however you looked at him. It soon became clear that his son-in-law was something else again.

First of all, it is very difficult to forgive a man for becoming rich, and it was soon clear that that was exactly what Joseph Kennedy, "the liquor dealer's son," as the Puritan Irish called him, was becoming. Not only that, his success was due not so much to chance as to intelligence and determination. Despite his name and his East Boston background, he was almost a Yankee, a Yankee being one who works hard all day, then goes home to get drunk. Working hard when you don't have to is forgivable, if difficult to comprehend, but going home to get drunk is a low Protestant (though often high church) trick. A man who gets drunk at home instead of in public is basically untrustworthy: he is afraid to be known; he keeps his own counsel, loving darkness and drawn (lace) curtains, behind which without a doubt he clasps to his bosom the mammon of iniquity and, for all anyone knows, doesn't get drunk at all. The man you can trust will drink in the Parker House, the Bellevue, or Purcell's where everyone can hear and report all he did and did not say, or a plausible blend of the two.

A Boston Irish politician (ignore the tense: I am speaking of the pre-World War II vintage) is frivolous. There is no other word. He may lie, he may steal, he may slander your wife and daughter, but it is all in the spirit of fun. Who the hell cares, as Harry Hope says over and over in *The Iceman Cometh*. It takes centuries of oppression and laziness to become truly civilized, and I could argue with some plausibility that the Boston Irish more than their compatriots in New York, Chicago, Jersey City, and Albany, preserved the traditions of their native land. Neither James M. Curley nor Honey Fitz created a political machine to compare with Hague's or Kelly's; indeed, a "political machine" was an invidious paradox, since the noun suggests an efficiency that takes all the fun out of the adjective. The same thing goes for art. For Joyce to announce in the person of Stephen Dedalus that he would create in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race only proved him to be the damn fool you always knew he was. What race? And who's running? There is always a Hickey about trying to take the kick out of the booze.

Joseph Kennedy, although he went "into business" as they say, obviously took politics more seriously than a gentleman should. Any man who wants to make his first million before he is thirty must have something else in mind. John Adams's remark that he was

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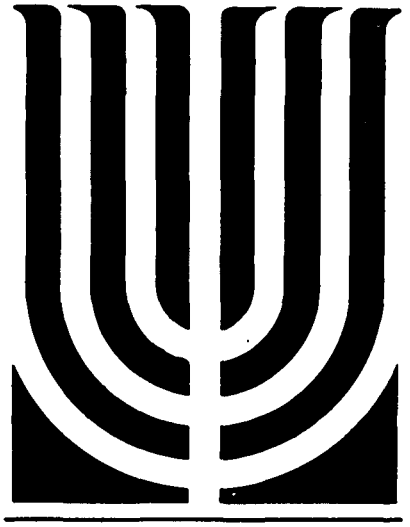

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in politics so that his son could do this and his grandson the other thing could well be applied to the Founding Father who, if Mr. Whalen is correct, is by temperament a pessimist but who has certainly lived and planned with the future of his name and his family in view. Ambition, we know, is a dangerous and dubious virtue, and to impose or urge it upon one's progeny is, if it proceeds from optimism, naïve; if from pessimism, desperate. It is, however, "American" and Joseph Kennedy, in this respect, was far more in tune with the national spirit than the backbiters in the barrooms.

THAT KENNEDY'S ambition went far beyond making several million dollars is clear. If he ever had undue respect for the business Establishment, he lost it in 1929 when he saw clearly and the Establishment did not. "Big businessmen are the most overrated men in the country. Here I am, a boy from East Boston, and I took 'em. So don't be impressed." According to Whalen, Kennedy's lack of respect was not due to any deeply held idea of society or politics. "His view of the economy was superficial and self-centered. He was a capitalist, yet one who stood apart from the *system* of finance, production, and distribution. He had no business, in the ordinary sense, and wanted none . . . . he had no deep understanding of the inner mechanism of the market economy, the interplay of individual decisions and actions that circulated goods and wealth through society." That may be true, but since Whalen does not identify those who did have such deep understanding, it is hard to make a comparative judgment.

Whatever his understanding, Kennedy, despite his admiration of President Hoover, began to work for Roosevelt's nomination in 1930. "I wanted him in the White House for my own security and for the security of our kids, and I was ready to do anything to help elect him." The best parts of Whalen's study, so far as the "Founding Father" himself is concerned, are books three and four, "The New Dealer" and "The Ambassador." From these pages it becomes clear enough that Kennedy always had an abiding and intelligent interest in politics. To many New Dealers he may have been an "amateur from Wall Street," but despite the hostility of such men as Louis Howe and Harold Ickes and despite his own "blunt candor," he entered the administration as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, where he did a good job, and as Ambassador to Great Britain where he came to agreeable terms with Neville Chamberlain. According to Whalen, Kennedy was a "thoroughgoing isolationist," one of the ". . . last important figures to enlist in the cause of appeasement."

As I read Whalen, Kennedy was always an isolationist and only became an appeaser when he went to England as ambassador. The "thoroughgoing isolationist" is not one to consider either belligerency or appeasement: neither is his business. When Kennedy became a diplomat he adopted the opinions that to him seemed most likely to avoid war. Since there was no clear policy out of Washington, he was able to express such opinions more openly than diplomats should, and Kennedy, if he understood little of the inner workings of our system, understood nothing at all of totalitarianism. In this, of course, he was in the company of many "wise" men. When Chamberlain's appeasement failed and Kennedy telephoned Roosevelt to tell him of the outbreak of war, he kept repeating, "It's the end of the world, the end of everything."

We may hope that he was wrong, but in the personal sense he was very nearly right. The man who in 1936 said he had four boys whom he did not want killed in a foreign war very nearly lost John and did lose Joe. And here, of course, we come to the essence of *The Founding Father*'s appeal. Although the book is about the father, Whalen keeps returning to the family, explaining the relationship between father and sons, brother and brother. That the Kennedys are close knit, there can be no doubt, but we must not, from that, take them as a model of middle-class "togetherness." The father was a father, not a pal; when the boys were young, the father was often

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away from home; as they entered adolescence, the boys were away. "Jack," the future President, was always the underdog *vis à vis* Joe Jr. The Kennedy motto, to steal from J. F. Powers, was "Be a Winner." John F. Kennedy learned early how to lose, but never to like it. (It may well be that he was the only Kennedy who did learn how to lose.) And as one reads about the "New Dealer" and "The Ambassador," one waits somewhat impatiently for references to the future President, for only he made this book even thinkable.

Those who know the Kennedys only through the President should read Whalen's book. Many think of John F. Kennedy as a handsome young man, smiling, confident, a war hero, one who never suffered defeat. But he knew defeat constantly as a child at the hands of his older brother; in the Pacific his favorite saying was that he'd been "shafted" (it turned out later that he was, as was the nation); and, when he finally ran for office in James Michael Curley's old Congressional district, it was to do what his older brother had been trained for. Anyone who knew anything about him knew that he was frequently in pain from his bad back, and one gets the impression from Whalen that his father never quite believed he had it in him. Nevertheless, it was this second son, the one who learned to lose early and yet not to quit who, as President, lost at the Bay of Pigs and came back to win a year and a half later during the missile crisis.

There are many things wrong with Whalen's book. He says that he's a reporter rather than a journalist, but his opinions are often very journalistic, i.e., trite, comments on "interviews." Like a good reporter, Whalen in his notes frequently respects the anonymity of his sources. Which is only to say there's a good deal of gossip passed off as research.

For example: Kennedy believed in a secular education for his sons. In fact he is reported to have said that he thought it would be "broadening for them to attend Protestant schools." Whalen then writes, "A friend, himself a Catholic, reflected on Kennedy's course.


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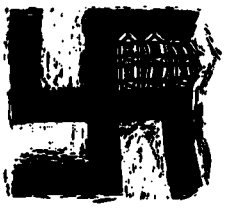

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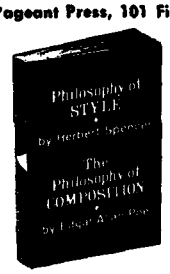


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'What Joe said, in effect, was: I'll send my girls to the Church to believe, my sons to the marketplace to know better.' " Rather a witty remark, and one turns to the back to learn its author. There one reads: "Interview in Washington on October 18, 1962." A very modest fellow, that friend. The best advice on Whalen is to read the book, and the notes, and keep the salt shaker next to your beer.

## ART AS PERFORMANCE

MUSIC OBSERVED. By B. H. HAGGIN. *Oxford University Press. 297 pp. $6.50.*

*Reviewed by* ALBERT GOLDMAN

BACK IN the mid-50's, B. H. Haggin, who at that time had been the music critic of *The Nation* for almost twenty years and had built up a formidable reputation as a fearless champion of the highest musical values, began to abandon, not his position or his pretensions, but his essential function by converting his weekly page of forthright comment on the current scene into a sophisticated record-rating service. Since then Haggin has shifted his base of operations to the *New Republic* and expanded it to include the *Hudson Review* and the *Yale Quarterly,* but he has not returned to writing the kind of essays that made him America's last distinguished music journalist. This situation leaves an old reader of Haggin like myself somewhat disgruntled. I regret the loss of the real Haggin even while I can appreciate the usefulness of the surrogate to readers who are still in the process of maturing their tastes. I also recognize that Haggin is the one record reviewer who did not suffer a serious loss both of memory and of hearing when LP's were introduced, and that consequently he has been the only reviewer to keep us in contact with the great performances of the past. So, too, he has been the only critic to campaign vigorously against the mercantile opportunism that first wiped out forty years of recording history and then made amends by restoring the classic performances in wretched "dubbings" whose broken china "highs," muddy "lows," and artificial resonances turn a once-beguiling illusion into an ugly fake.

But years and years of stringing together sound but summary judgments of "recent releases" do not constitute criticism in any ambitious sense, nor does it provide durable material for making a book. *Music Observed* itself was made by joining all the carefully hoarded odds and ends of thirty years to the gleanings of recent lean years, and by adding liberal borrowings from *Music in the Nation,* Haggin's last (and vastly superior) collection. Certain old articles have been stitched to others to increase their significance; two or three little bits have been spliced together; and postscripts have been appended to the more archaic items. Yet not even such extensive editing can disguise the fact that Haggin's mind has lost its vitality—a fact which is revealed not only in the way he made this book, but in the articles themselves, which more and more turn away from the artists and issues of the present day to resurrect the dead and stir the coals of extinguished controversy. Thus, in one of his exceedingly rare full-length pieces, published three years ago in the *American Scholar,* Haggin returns to a familiar obsession, the overrated authority of musicologists, and devotes much of his space to the castigation of a man who died thirteen years ago. This same article serves as a convenient specimen of what Haggin's criticism has fallen to: for not only does it pour its wrath on persons whose importance to Haggin, one suspects, consists only in their being competitors for critical authority, but it also shows to what unscholarly lengths Haggin will go to discountenance his academic rivals. The most damning evidence to support his indictment of Alfred Einstein, it turns out, was supplied to Haggin by some nameless informant, evidently a graduate student, and there is no indication that Haggin subjected this evidence to even the slightest check.

*Music Observed* has not been very enthusiastically received, but its author's imposing reputation, especially among the literary intellectuals who rule the reviews, has muffled the protests one hears ev-

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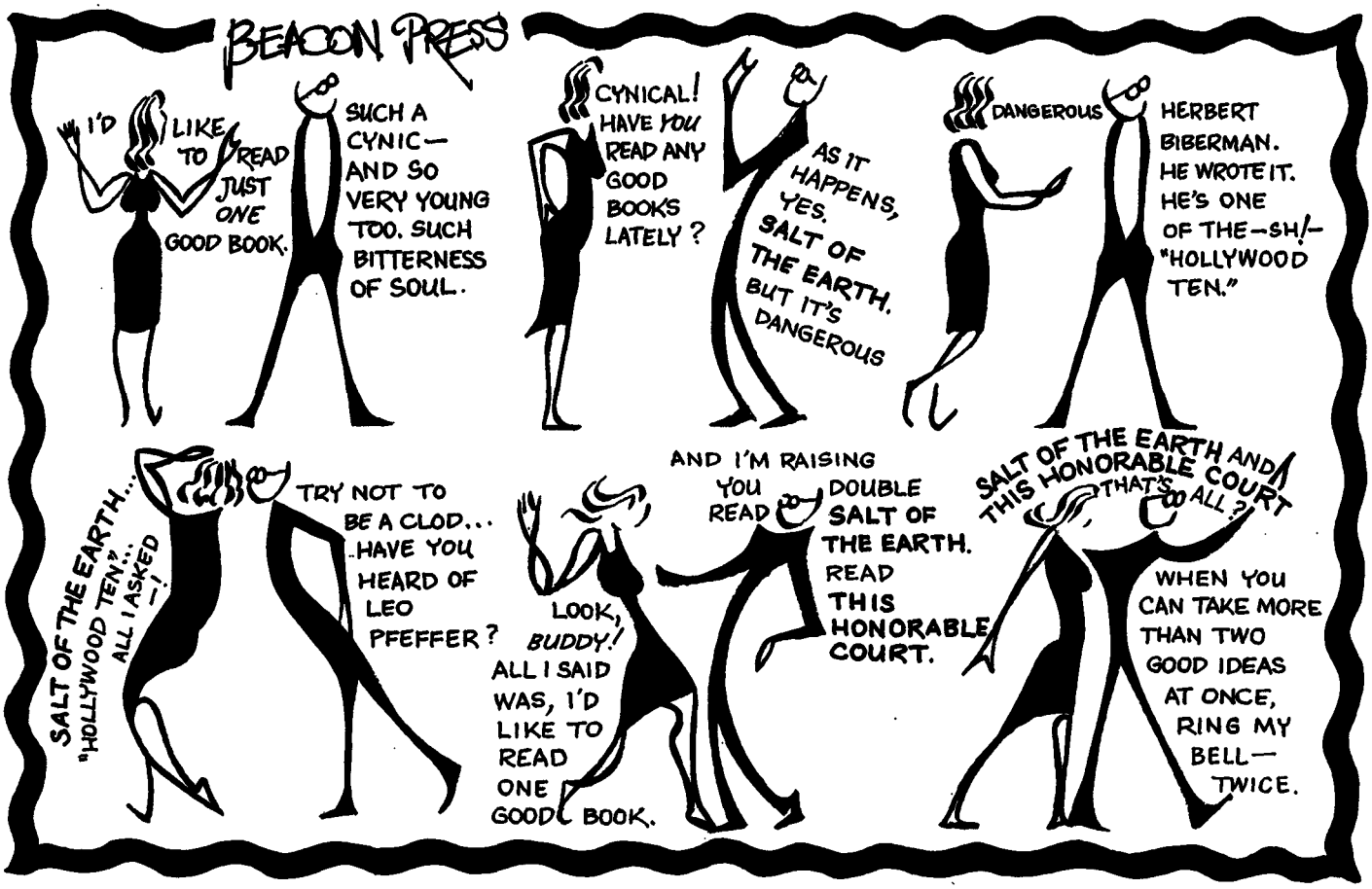
erywhere today from musicians and music lovers. Certainly no major critic has ever been guilty of so many sins of omission. Haggin has drastically subordinated the creative to the performance values of music, restricted even his criticism of performance to the standard repertoire and the well-established musicians; turned his back on modern music, ignored jazz (except to use it as a stalking horse for attacking other critics), and, finally, has responded with suspicion and hostility to every sort of historical, cultural, or aesthetic generalization.

Exclusion is implicit in Haggin's guiding credo—that criticism (in the words of E. M. Forster) "considers the object in itself, as an entity, and tells us what it can about its life." Applying this familiar principle of the aestheticism of the 30's in its most literal sense, Haggin aggressively opposed his two most distinguished colleagues, Paul Rosenfeld and Virgil Thomson, both of whom were notable for the comprehensiveness of their grasp of the work itself, and for their habit of embedding the discussion of art in an extraordinarily rich setting of historical, cultural, biographical, and technical considerations. Contemptuously rejecting this eclectic approach, Haggin failed to develop his own purist viewpoint into a practical aesthetic, as did, for example, Donald Francis Tovey, whose practice of writing program notes in the form of detailed analyses culminated eventually in accurate and impressive generalizations about musical forms, styles, and conventions. In Haggin's case the dogma of *das Ding an sich* has meant nothing more than attentive listening to one performer after another and the comparison and evaluation of these in terse, unsystematized verdicts; essentially he has done just a superior version of the job an ordinary newspaper reviewer does.

THE MOST notorious exclusion of which Haggin has been guilty—his lifelong refusal to deal with serious modern music—is clearly related to his inadequacy as a critic of music per se as opposed to the performance of music. While he has, to his credit, repeatedly attacked those petty pretenders to composition who speak in a debased idiom drawn from the 19th century (Menotti, Barber, Bernstein, Blitzstein, Moore, Harris, Kurt Weill in his later years), he has stubbornly avoided rationalizing his loathing for Schönberg, Bartok, Hindemith, Berg—the modern classics. But the distance at which he stands from modern music is indicative of the distance at which he stands from all music, and explains why he has always functioned best as a critic of performance—that is, of music mediated by another mind. Thus, after thirty years of aversion, Haggin finally came around to accepting Stravinsky after George Ballanchine translated the music into terms Haggin could appreciate.

Haggin's reputation as a critic of performance was won in the wars of the late 30's and the 40's when the principal task of music criticism was to persuade the general public of the superiority of the modern,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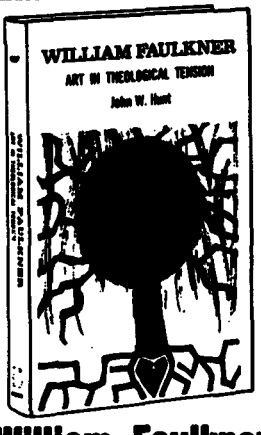


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classically disciplined type of performer over the traditional romantic virtuoso. As the leading critical proponent of the new performance values, Haggin deserves a share of the credit for the fact that these values won acceptance and still prevail today. His stance was that of the lofty judicial critic, who is moved by no extraneous considerations, and his integrity was attested to by his heedlessness regarding personal advantage. Writing for a pittance, Haggin endured the annoyances and indignities inflicted by irate Philistines, offended artists, crass concert managers, and ultimately his own editors who sought to block his precedent-breaking attacks. Summoning before his bench in the back pages of *The Nation* every great performer of that remarkable age, he tried the cases that inspired the most intense controversy; here were judged the relative merits of Heifetz and Szigeti; Fischer, Gieseking, and Schnabel; Toscanini and Walter; the Busch and the Budapest Quartets. And here were sentenced to the stocks—delighting sophisticated listeners who had long been impatient with their laxities and excesses—a number of famous delinquents: Horowitz, Rubinstein, Hoffmann, Stokowski, Ormandy, and Barbirolli. It is to Haggin's lasting credit that in virtually every case he found for the right party.

Even in this period, however, there were discrepancies in Haggin's judgments that were impossible to reconcile because the opinions with which he supported his verdicts were so sketchy. How could the champion of Arturo Toscanini also be the champion of Artur Schnabel, and how could the admirer of Schnabel also be the admirer of one of his most disappointing pupils, the frigid Webster Aitken? After puzzling over these inconsistencies for years, I finally got the chance to ask Haggin for his explanation. His answer startled me: though Toscanini and Schnabel had very different ways of "operating," he said, they arrived at the same goal. Now there could hardly be a greater disparity of "goals" than the values embodied in the performances of these two artists. Yet Haggin had so restricted his response that all he had ears for in these opposed styles of performance was the plastic vividness and power that in Toscanini was the end, in Schnabel only the means. Toscanini, whom Haggin idolizes, ruthlessly subordinated the poetic aspect of music to the plastic and violated the traditional sense of the classics to attain a harder, sharper line, a deeper incision of detail, and a more uniform mold. By speeding up his tempi, exaggerating his attack, tightening his rhythm, and pinching his tone, Toscanini achieved astonishing effects of music *sui generis*, just as George Ballanchine, by adopting the same tactics has produced some extraordinary excitements in the dance. But this fierce streamlining has meant for music (and for the dance) a terrible reduction of its expressive resources and a perversion of the character of most of the masterworks. Moreover, this over-emphasis on *plastique* is regressive as well as reductive; it tends to roll the art back toward its original condition as a kind of aural clay to be molded in abstract patterns—which is where music was before Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, expressive geniuses who finally succeeded in infusing sound with meaning.

Today the performance style so fresh in the 30's is becoming dull and mannered. There are signs of another crisis in taste, as critics and listeners come to recognize the hollowness beneath the impeccable surface of most contemporary performances. In the divisions that lie ahead, B. H. Haggin will be on the side of the old order—indeed, he gives indications of becoming an apologist for its worst faults. Confronted with a generation of talented, refined young performers like Van Cliburn, Leon Fleisher, and others who do possess the good taste, musicianship, and technique that Haggin has always admired, but who do not possess the passion, the poetic imagination, and the power of personal communication that many of the classics demand, Haggin can do no more than commend the young men and swiftly change the subject.

What is so surprising is that ultimately Haggin's sensitivity should turn out to be a kind of in-

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sensitivity, his sophistication a sort of simplistic concentration upon the narrowly "musical." The reason for this, one suspects, is an aesthetic prudery so extreme that it confuses emotion with sentimentality and the endeavor to communicate the spiritual dimensions of music with "gush." Certainly, *Music Observed* reveals much that B. H. Haggin has failed to observe during thirty-five years of constricting—or averting—his gaze.

## THE UNITY OF EXPERIENCE*

SHADOW AND ACT. By RALPH ELLISON. *Random House. 317 pp. $4.95.*

*Reviewed by* ROBERT PENN WARREN

EVEN IF Ralph Ellison were not the author of *Invisible Man,* his recent collection of essays, *Shadow and Act,* would be a very significant work. There are astute commentaries on literature, music, and society, and the commentaries are enriched and validated by an underlying sense of a life being lived with energy, sympathy, and joy. But Ralph Ellison is the author of *Invisible Man* and of an impending novel which, if we are to judge from excerpts, promises to illustrate new powers and to extend his fame; and this fact inevitably imputes a further significance to the essays. Here we can see how, over more than a score of years, in another dimension, the mind and sensibility of Ellison have been working, and we can hope to see some enlightening relations between that dimension and the dimension of his fiction.

In the preface to *Shadow and Act,* Ellison says of his struggle to become a writer:

> I found the greatest difficulty for a Negro writer was the problem of revealing what he truly felt, rather than serving up what Negroes were supposed to feel, and were encouraged to feel. And linked to this was the difficulty, based upon our long habit of deception and evasion, of depicting what really happened within our areas of American life, and putting down with honesty and without bowing to ideological

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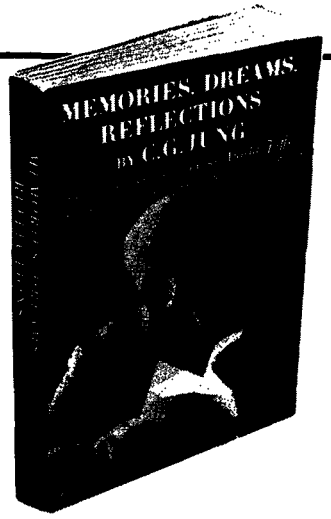


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expediencies the attitudes and values which give Negro American life its sense of wholeness and which renders it bearable and human and, when measured by our own terms, desirable.

In other words, the moral effort to see and recognize the truth of the self and of the world, and the artistic effort to say the truth are regarded as aspects of the same process. This interfusion of the moral and the artistic is, for Ralph Ellison, a central fact and a fact that involves far more than his literary views: for if "truth" moves into "art," so "art" can move backward (and forward) into "truth." Art can, in other words, move into life. Not merely, Ellison would have it, by opening our eyes to life, not merely by giving us models of action and response, but by, quite literally, creating us. For him, the high function of technique is "the task of creating value," and in this task we create the self. This process is a life-process—a way of knowing and experiencing in which is growth: a growth in integrity, literally a unifying of the self, of the random or discrepant possibilities and temptations of experience.

Now, "ideological expediency" would have Ralph Ellison formulate his "difficulty" somewhat differently. It would prompt him to slant things so that the special problems of the Negro writer would be read as one aspect of the Negro's victimization by the white man. A very good case—in one perspective, a perfect case—can be made out for that interpretation. But Ellison refuses that gambit of the alibi. In various ways, he repudiates the "Negro alibi" for the Negro writer. For instance, in the essay "The World and the Jug," he says: ". . . when the work of Negro writers has been rejected they have all too often protected their egos by blaming racial discrimination, while turning away from the fairly obvious fact that good art—and Negro musicians are present to demonstrate this—commands attention to itself. . . . And they forget that publishers will publish almost anything which is written with even a minimum of competency."

Ellison is, in other words, more concerned with the way a man confronts his individual doom than with the derivation of that doom; not pathos, but power, in its deepest inner sense, is what concerns him. He is willing, pridefully, to head into responsibility. But in the last sentence of the above quotation from the preface to *Shadow and Act*, Ellison flouts even more violently "ideological expediencies" which dictate that the Negro advertise the blankness, bleakness, and misery of his life. Instead, Ellison refers to its "wholeness," its desirability, and elsewhere in the same preface he refers to "the areas of life and personality which claimed my mind beyond any limitations *apparently* imposed by my racial identity."

THIS ATTITUDE, which permeates Ellison's work, comes to focus in two essays which are probably destined to become a classic statement; they were written as a reply to Irving Howe's essay "Black Boys and Native Sons."* Howe's piece takes Richard Wright's work to be the fundamental expression of the Negro genius. The day *Native Son* appeared, he says, "American culture was changed forever. . . . A blow at the white man, the novel forced him to recognize himself as an oppressor. A blow at the black man, the novel forced him to recognize the cost of his submission." Though Howe admires the performance of both Baldwin and Ellison, he sees them as having rejected the naturalism and straight protest of Wright, as traitors to the cause of "clenched militancy"; and then, to quote Ellison, Howe, "appearing suddenly in black face," demands: "What, then, was the experience of a man with a black skin, what *could* it be here in this country? How could a Negro put pen to paper, how could he so much as think or breathe, without some impulsion to protest . . .?" And he goes on to say that the Negro's very existence "forms a constant pressure on his literary work

* The two appeared originally in *The New Leader* (December 9, 1963, February 3, 1964), and now in Ellison's collection of essays are fused under the title "The World and the Jug." Howe's essay had appeared in *Dissent*, Fall 1963.

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. . . with a pain and ferocity that nothing could remove."*

This, to Ellison, is the "ideological proposition that what whites think of the Negro's reality is more important than what Negroes themselves know it to be"; and this, to Ellison, is Howe's "white liberal version of the white Southern myth of absolute separation of the races." That is, the critic picks out the Negro's place (i.e. his feelings and his appropriate function) and then puts him in it. "I fear the implications of Howe's ideas concerning the Negro writer's role as actionist more than I do the State of Mississippi," Ellison writes. Howe's view is another example of a situation that "is not unusual for a Negro to experience," as Ellison says in a review of Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, "a sensation that he does not exist in the real world at all—only in the nightmarish fantasy of the white American mind." That is a violation of "the basic unity of human experience," undertaken in the "interest of specious political and philosophical conceits":

> Prefabricated Negroes are sketched on sheets of paper and superimposed upon the Negro community; then when someone thrusts his head through the page and yells, "Watch out there, Jack, there's people living under here," they are shocked and indignant.

We must not fall into the same error and take his attack on the white liberal's picture of the Negro to be Ellison's concealed version of the common notion that no white man can "know" a Negro. By his theory of the "basic unity of human experience," which we shall come to presently, and by his theory of the moral force of the imagination, such a view—except in the provisional, limited way that common sense dictates—would be untenable. What Ellison would reject is the violation of the density of life by an easy abstract formulation. Even militancy, if taken merely as a formula, can violate the density of life. For instance, in "The World

* This is, of course, a totally abrupt and therefore necessarily distorted summary of Howe's essay, but the present concern is with the significance of Ellison's response taken in itself.

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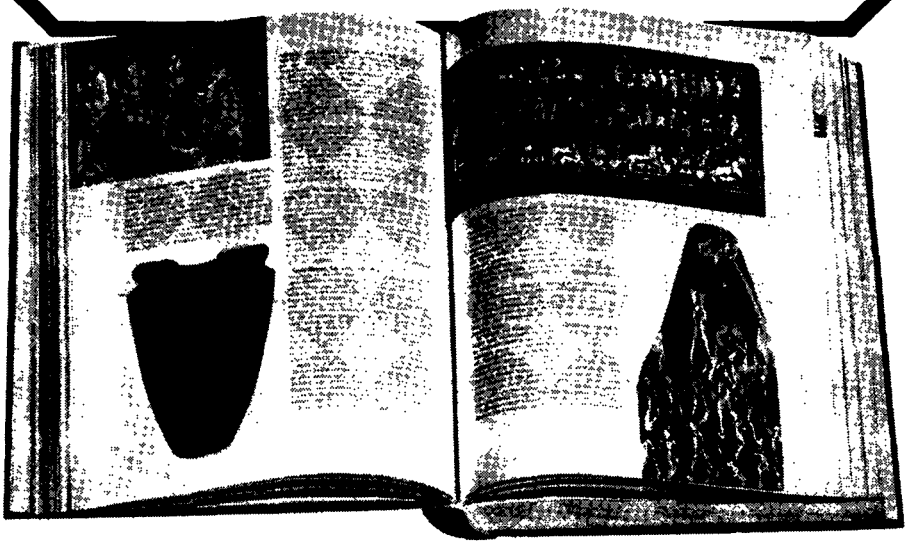

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and the Jug," he says: ". . . what an easy con game for ambitious, publicity-hungry Negroes this stance of 'militancy' has become." He is as ready to attack a Negro on this point as a white man. In a review of LeRoi Jones's study of Negro music, *Blues People,* he says that Jones "attempts to impose an ideology upon this cultural complexity" and that even when a Negro treats this subject "the critical intelligence must perform the difficult task which only it can perform."

*The basic unity of human experience*—that is what Ellison asserts; and he sets the richness of his own experience and that of many Negroes he has known, and his own early capacity to absorb the general values of Western culture, over against what Wright called "the essential bleakness of black life in America." What he is saying here is not that "bleakness" does not exist, and exist for many, but that it has not been the key fact of his own experience, and that his own experience is part of the story. It must be reckoned with, too:

> For even as his life toughens the Negro, even as it brutalizes him, sensitizes him, dulls him, goads him to anger, moves him to irony, sometimes fracturing and sometimes affirming his hopes . . . it *conditions* him to deal with his life and with himself. Because it is *his* life, and no mere abstraction in somebody's head.

Not only the basic unity, but the rich variety, of life is what concerns him; and this fact is connected with his personal vision of the opportunity in being an American: "The diversity of American life is often painful, frequently burdensome and always a source of conflict, but in it lies our fate and our hope." In many places, Ellison insists on his love of diversity and a pluralistic society. For instance, in "That Same Pain, That Same Pleasure": "I believe in diversity, and I think that the real death of the United States will come when everyone is just alike." The appreciation of this variety is, in itself, a school for the imagination and moral sympathy. And, for Ellison, being a "Negro American" has to do with this appreciation, not only of the Negro past in America, but with the complex fluidity of the present:

> It has to do with a special perspective on the national ideals and the national conduct, and with a tragicomic attitude toward the universe. It has to do with special emotions evoked by the details of cities and countrysides, with forms of labor and with forms of pleasure; with sex and with love, with food and with drink, with machines and with animals; with climates and with dwellings, with places of worship and places of entertainment; with garments and dreams and idioms of speech; with manners and customs, with religion and art, with life styles and hoping, and with that special sense of predicament and fate which gives direction and resonance to the Freedom Movement. It involves a rugged initiation into the mysteries and rites of color which makes it possible for Negro Americans to suffer the injustice which race and color are used to excuse without losing sight of either the humanity of those who inflict that injustice or the motives, rational or irrational, out of which they act. It imposes the uneasy burden and occasional joy of a complex double vision, a fluid, ambivalent response to men and events which represents, at its finest, a profoundly civilized adjustment to the cost of being human in this modern world.

Out of this view of the life of the "Negro American"—which is a view of *life*—it is no wonder that Ellison does not accept a distinction between the novel as "protest" and the novel as "art"—or rather, sees this distinction as a merely superficial one, not to be trusted. His own approach is twofold. On the one hand, he says "protest is an element of all art," but he would not limit protest to the social or political objection. In one sense, it might be a "technical assault" on earlier styles—but we know that Ellison regards "techniques" as moral vision, and a way of creating the self. In another sense, the protest may be, as in *Oedipus Rex* or *The Trial,* "against the limitation of human life itself." In yet another sense, it may be—and I take it that Ellison assumes that it always is—a protest against some aspect of a personal fate:

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. . . that intensity of personal anguish which compels the artist to seek relief by projecting it into the world in conjunction with other things; that anguish might take the form of an acute sense of inferiority for one [person], homosexuality for another, an overwhelming sense of the absurdity of human life for still another . . . the experience that might be caused by humiliation, by a harelip, by a stutter, by epilepsy—indeed, by any and everything in life which plunges the talented individual into solitude while leaving him the will to transcend his condition through art.

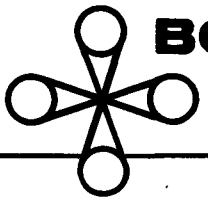
And the last words of this preceding quotation bring us to the second idea in his twofold approach to the distinction between the novel as protest and the novel as art: the ideal of the novel is a transmutation of protest into art. In speaking of Howe's evaluation of his own novel, Ellison says:

> If *Invisible Man* is even "apparently" free from "the ideological and emotional penalties suffered by Negroes in this country," it is because I tried to the best of my ability to transform these elements into art. My goal was not to escape, or hold back, but to work through; to transcend, as the blues transcend the painful conditions with which they deal.

And he relates this impulse toward transcendence into art to a stoical American Negro tradition which teaches one to master and contain pain; "which abhors as obscene any trading on one's own anguish for gain or sympathy"; which deals with the harshness of existence "as men at their best have always done." And he summarizes the relevance of this tradition: "It takes fortitude to be a man and no less to be an artist."

In other words, to be an artist partakes, in its special way, of the moral force of being a man. And with this we come again, in a new perspective, to Ellison's view of the "basic unity of experience." If there is anguish, there is also the possibility of the transmutation of anguish, "the occasional joy of a complex double vision."

For in this "double vision" the "basic unity" can be received, and life can be celebrated. "I believe,"

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he says to Howe, "that true novels, even when most pessimistic and bitter, arise out of an impulse to celebrate human life, and therefore are ritualistic and ceremonial at their core." The celebration of life —that is what Ellison sees as the final nature of his fiction, or of any art. And in this "double vision" and the celebration which it permits—no, entails—we find, even, the reconciliation possible in recognizing "the humanity of those who inflict injustice." And with this Ellison has arrived, I take it, at his own secular version of Martin Luther King's conception of *agapé*.

IF, IN PURSUING this line of thought about Ralph Ellison, I have made him seem unaware of the plight of the Negro American in the past or the present, I have done him a grave wrong. He is fully aware of the blankness of the fate of many Negroes, and the last thing to be found in him is any trace of that cruel complacency of some who have, they think, mastered fate. If he emphasizes the values of challenge in the plight of the Negro, he would not use this to justify that plight; and if he applauds the disciplines induced by that plight, he does so in no spirit of self-congratulation, but in a spirit of pride in being numbered with those people.

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NEIL COMPTON *is professor of English at Sir George Williams University in Montreal.*

CHAIM POTOK, *a new contributor, is managing editor* of Conservative Judaism.

JASON EPSTEIN, *vice president of Random House, writes frequently for the* New York Review.

THOMAS F. CURLEY *is completing his third novel, which will be published by Atheneum.*

ALBERT GOLDMAN *teaches English at Columbia, and formerly served as music critic for the* New Leader.

ROBERT PENN WARREN's *"Two for SNCC" appeared last month. The present review has been adapted from his new book,* Who Speaks for the Negro? *which will be published later this month by Random House.*

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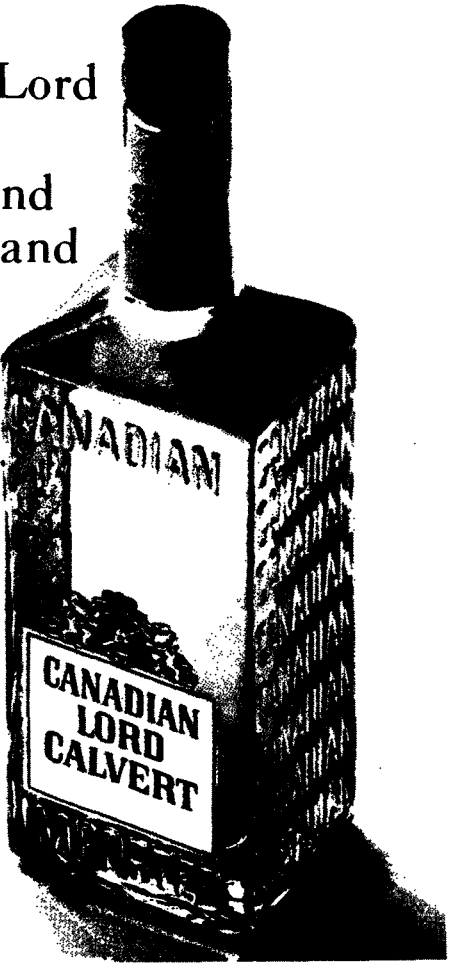


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